Moral and Spiritual Aspects of Baptism

N. J. AYLSWORTH

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Moral and Spiritual Aspects of Baptism

TOGETHER WITH AN EXAMINATION OF THE NATURE OF FAITH AND ITS RELATION TO BAPTISM: BEING A PHILOSOPHICAL AND SCRIPTURAL EXAMINATION OF THE CONDITIONS OF SALVATION AS PRESENTED IN THE GOSPEL.

By N. J. AYLSWORTH, A. M.

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TO THE

MANY FRIENDS

WHOSE SYMPATHY AND DEVOTION DURING MANY YEARS OF ILLNESS HAVE BEEN TO ME A NEW REVELATION OF THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

WITH

SINCERE GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION.

PREFACE.

PHILOSOPHY has always exerted a powerful, and often a distorting, influence on religious belief. This has been strikingly exemplified in the history of Christianity. Although the Church has always believed herself to be in possession of an inspired and infallible revelation of the divine will, and although this revelation was delivered in the plain, simple language of the people, and spoke with apparent definiteness and clearness on most subjects relating to duty and destiny, views the most divergent have been held at different times on many of these subjects, and professedly derived from the Scriptures themselves. A singular fact in the history of religious opinion is that, whenever prevailing habits of thought have tended to diverge in any respect from the obvious meaning of Scripture statements on any subject, the Scriptures, although believed to be infallibly true, have not been able to arrest the tendency, but, while perhaps modifying it to some extent, have themselves been subjected to new and often violent interpretations, to bring them into accord with the prevailing view. Strangely enough, such methods of producing harmony have seemed to satisfy many noble men, and have aroused no suspicion that the new view was not in accord with Scripture teaching. One result, however, which seems to have been generally overlooked, has almost invariably followed—passages thus treated have fallen out of use; and it seems not to have been

seen that this in itself was a strong evidence that the new view was not Scriptural.

What has been true of so many other subjects has also been true of baptism. There is probably no subject in the entire range of Christian teaching on which the New Testament speaks with more definiteness and clearness than on the design of Christian baptism; yet almost every conceivable view has been held regarding it, from that which attached to baptism a magical saving power, to that which rejects it altogether as worthless. Most Protestant peoples at the present time are placing such interpretations on the Scripture statements on this subject as seem to them to accord with the genius of Christianity and a true spiritual philosophy; and such interpretations no doubt seem satisfactory, but the striking fact remains that nearly all these passages have been thrown out of use in the work of modern evangelism. Those answers embracing baptism which were given by the apostles to inquirers are now no longer given to those who ask what they must do to be saved—a strange fact which calls for explanation. Another fact which challenges attention is that the interpretations placed on many of the passages of Scripture which speak of the design of baptism are not those which would occur to an unsophisticated reader.

These facts give warrant for serious suspicion that the modern view so widely held is not that of the inspired writers. The author believes that it is not, and that both the spirit of Christianity and a true philosophy, moral and spiritual, fully justify the teachings of the New Testament on the design of baptism,

in their most obvious sense, and must render such answers of the apostles to inquirers as speak of baptism both acceptable and desirable for use in modern meetings. It is believed that baptism was not, in the primitive church, as it is now so widely regarded, "a mere outward act," but that it contained spiritual elements, human and divine, which abundantly entitle it to the position manifestly assigned to it by the language of the Scriptures. "The method of inwardness," so strongly characteristic of modern thought, includes nothing with which we can afford to dispense; but it has diverted attention from some weighty truths which lie outside of its range, and whose recognition is necessary to reaching the broad sanity of Scripture teaching, and securing to the gospel its highest efficiency in the conversion of the world.

It is the object of this work to call attention to these truths, and to exhibit them in their relation to the entire Scripture teaching on the subject of salvation.

It is hoped that what has here been imperfectly done may stimulate thought in a wide field of investigation, which gives promise of abundant return.

N. J. Aylsworth.

Auburn, N. Y.

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BOOK I.

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF BAPTISM

PART I

THE MORAL ASPECT OF BAPTISM

CHAPTER I.

PERPETUATED SINS.

Our views of the nature of an evil always determine our conceptions of the means necessary to overcome it. To repel the attack of an assassin and to repel an attack of typhoid fever require vastly different methods of resistance. You cannot cure cholera by administering the remedies for a common cold. The necessity for the adaptation of means to ends is so manifest that it is universally recognized, and unconsciously dominates all our thinking. This is true, not only of matters relating to the physical world, but equally so of those in the moral realm.

Superficial views of sin always cause the redemption of Christ to be held in light esteem; and the history of the church is replete with lessons showing that distorted or inadequate ideas regarding the nature of sin have ever reacted upon men's views of the gospel, causing modifications of an injurious and often of a disastrous character.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to enter exhaustively into the discussion of the nature of sin, but to call attention to a single phase of the subject which is at present too much disregarded.

§ 1. The Nature and Moral Bearings of Perpetuated Sins.

There is a class of sins which, in view of a certain

characteristic, may be properly called *limited*. Their commission is confined to a certain definite point of time, and there ceases.

To illustrate: A man while engaged at his work becomes exasperated, and utters a profane oath. It was not premeditated, and, when thinking of it afterwards, he does not approve of it. On provocation he may commit the same sin again, but it is clear that in the interval he is not swearing. His heart may not be right, but he is not committing this particular sin. It is true, also, that the guilt of the sin remains, and will continue till he is pardoned; but the *commission* of this particular sin is confined to a certain definite point of time, and it may, in this sense, properly be said to be *limited*.

If the man repents, it is plain that he can do nothing to undo such an act. It has gone into the past, and is beyond his reach. It is only within his power to feel sorry for it, and resolve that it shall never be repeated. If this repentance be sincere, and he confesses his sin to God, asking forgiveness, there appears to be no moral reason why he should not be forgiven.

Were all sins of this character, it would be safe for us to conclude, on moral grounds, that the only conditions of the divine pardon are repentance, involving a resolution not to repeat our sins, confession to God, and prayer for his forgiveness. This view seems to be largely prevalent in the popular conceptions of sin and its remission. The reasoning is not defective, but the premise is inadequate. It is not true that all sins are of this limited character, and this fatal fact vitiates the conclusion. There is a very large class of sins of quite a different nature.

To illustrate: A man steals an article of value from another, and retains it in his possession. At first view this sin may seem to be like the other, *limited*. The act of taking the property occurs at a certain definite point of time, and there ends. Is not the sin, then, limited? Does it not cease to be committed as soon as the property is taken? Before so concluding we must inquire what it was in the man's act that constituted the crime of theft. Plainly it was the *depriving another of his property and appropriating it to himself*. But he has been doing this *very thing* ever since he stole the article. Not a day has passed in which he has not been depriving the injured man of his property; and he has been committing a *continued crime*. The act of taking the property was but the *beginning* of a crime which has continued in all its force ever since. This is true both objectively and subjectively. So far as the injury to the other is concerned, it is plain that it has been perpetuated. But this is equally true of the mental part of the crime. At the time of taking the property the offender *willed* to deprive another of that which belonged to him, and he has *willed* to continue that deprivation. In all its moral aspects, the crime of theft simply *began* with the taking of the property, and has continued to be committed from that time to the present. It is a *perpetuated crime*.

Now, suppose that this man repents, resolving that he will commit no *more* thefts, and comes to God asking his forgiveness. Can he be forgiven? Surely not; for he is committing theft all the time. He has resolved not to commit any *other* thefts, but he is already perpetuating *this* one, and will continue to do so. Evidently his repentance is worthless, and his pardon

would be immoral, should it be granted.

It is, therefore, plain that a course which proves adequate when dealing with a *limited* sin, becomes wholly inadequate when applied to a *perpetuated* sin, and leaves it, in all its essential features, untouched. The question of *perpetuation* must be taken into account, and nothing short of putting a stop to the continued commission can be of any avail.

Suppose, now, that the thief *does* so repent of his crime that he resolves to return the stolen property—*after a while*. This would be an effort to deal with the matter of perpetuation, but is it satisfactory? The penitent comes to God, having resolved to restore the stolen property at some future time, and, falling on his knees, prays for forgiveness. What is the nature of this repentance? It contains two factors—a resolution to *stop* the perpetuation of a theft, and a resolution to *continue* it—for a time. It is a resolution to *steal* and *not* to steal, the two parts of it being allotted to different portions of time. It need not be said that a repentance which contains within it a resolution to commit sin, even for a short time, is defective, however sincere the intention may be to abandon it later on. Were pardon to be granted on such a repentance, it would amount to forgiving sin in advance, as well as during the very time of its commission, and would be of the nature of *granting an indulgence* to commit sin. Such a pardon would be a violation of moral law.

There is no other way to deal with a perpetuated sin than to put a stop to its commission. This will require an *act* of some kind, and what the act must be will depend altogether on the nature of the sin. There are many varieties of perpetuated sins, and

many different acts are therefore necessary to bring them to an end. Two of these varieties I may notice in passing: There are sins which are purely *mental* in character and which may naturally be brought to an end by a simple act of the *mind*. Sins which have been not simply mental, but also external, consisting of wrongs perpetrated on others, will naturally require an *external act* for their undoing.

Whatever it may require to undo a perpetuated sin or wrong, it is certain that so long as a man postpones that undoing, he is perpetuating the sin in all its features, morally as well as otherwise. *No repentance is genuine which does not deal with perpetuated sins by immediately undoing them.*

§ 2. *Christ's Teaching on the Subject.*

Christ had some very definite things to say regarding perpetuated sins. In Mk. xi. 25, he says: "Whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." We here have, not an external act of injury against another, but a harbored grudge—a *mental* sin; and it will require an appropriate *mental* act to bring it to an end. That act must be, in the very nature of the case, *forgiveness*. This cannot be deferred, we are taught, even until the prayer is ended. It is a *perpetuated sin*, which will shut heaven against the petitioner and cut off the divine forgiveness. This same fact is stated with even greater emphasis in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. vi. 14, 15). We learn from these passages that if such a sin exists, it interposes a fatal barrier to the divine forgiveness and acceptance, which no general repentance and no pleadings of prayer can remove—*nothing* but the performance of

the act necessary to bringing the perpetuated sin to an end.

In Mt. v. 23, 24, we have an example of perpetuated sin of quite a different character. The passage reads: "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

That it is a perpetuated sin with which we here have to do, is clear from the fact that it consists of some act committed in the past, whose wrong did not cease with the commission, but still continues, and will continue till the offender does something to make it right. Some sin remains in full force which must be *un*-committed. This case differs from the one just considered in that the sin is not confined exclusively to the *mind* of the one committing it, but has passed outward, in word or deed, to the injury of another. It is evident that this injury cannot be undone by any merely *mental* act. As the sin has traveled out of the mind, so must the remedy. The offender must go to the one he has wronged and make reparation. In just what this reparation must consist, will depend altogether on the character of the wrong he has committed. If property has been stolen, it must be returned; if other injury has been done, it must be repaired. If, by unkind words, hardness has been produced between them (see v. 22), the wrong must be confessed, and forgiveness sought. Such steps will be necessary to the undoing of the wrong committed; and no merely *mental* act, such as we found sufficient in case of a harbored grudge, will meet the conditions of the case. Much less can a

repentance containing simply a resolution to commit *no more* such wrongs, avail to undo this sin. To deal with such a wrong as a *limited* sin, would be to leave it wholly untouched and in full force of perpetuation.

There is another feature of this case which it is of great importance to consider. The worshiper is represented as having come from his home, bringing his gift to be offered. He stands before the altar ready to offer it,—or according to the reading of the Revised Version, is actually engaged in performing the service,—when he remembers that he has committed an unrighted wrong against his brother (neighbor). If he now repents of this wrong, and resolves to make reparation afterwards, may he not go forward and complete his offering, and be accepted? No; the very purpose and force of the illustration is to cut this off. Had the command been that no one should bring an offering to the Lord, while such a wrong continued to exist, room might have been left for the conjecture that, in case a man had already brought his gift, and was in the very act of offering it when he bethought him of the wrong against his brother, he might, perhaps, be allowed to complete the offering, and then undo his wrong afterward. But Christ chooses a case of just this kind, in order that he may cut off this very thing. He puts a man in that very situation and then tells him to STOP—go back, undo the wrong, and then come and complete his offering.

When it was a mental sin with which we had to do, the offender was not even allowed to finish his prayer until he had undone it, and it was found that mere repentance could not undo it, that another mental

act was required. So now, when the wrong is not simply mental but external, the wrong-doer is not allowed to proceed a *single step further* in his offering, till he has undone the mischief. The reason for this is given in verse 22, and is, that the offender is resting under the divine condemnation. The "therefore" at the beginning of v. 23, points to this as the reason. If this be true, it is evident that no worship can be acceptable, and that no divine acceptance or forgiveness is possible, while the wrong continues to exist.

This view is hopelessly at variance with the doctrine that the divine forgiveness is granted, in all cases, immediately on repentance, and independent of any succeeding act. Yet this is clearly the emphatic teaching of Christ, whether we may be able to find a reason for it in our philosophy of salvation or not.

But this emphatic demand is *not* arbitrary; it finds its explanation in the very nature of a perpetuated sin. A repentance involving simply a resolution to bring a perpetuated sin to an end at some future time, is also a resolution to continue it till that time —in other words, a resolution to commit sin. Such a repentance must be defective, and any pardon bestowed on the ground of such a repentance would be of the nature of granting an indulgence to sin. Even though the postponement were but for a short time, it would not alter the moral aspect of the question. Practically, a short postponement would be far less objectionable than a long one, but the principle would be the same in each case. To come to God for pardon while delaying the undoing of a perpetuated sin would be to render both the repentance and the pardon (should it be granted) morally defective.

The question is not one of length of time at all, but one of precedence. The perpetuated sin should be terminated before the pardon is sought. Such is the teaching of Christ. There can be no divine acceptance, no pardon and no approach to God, while a wrong which can be undone continues to exist.

The declarations of Christ which we have just considered, are found in the Sermon on the Mount, and form a part of those sublime teachings which lie at the very foundation of Christianity. They belong to the fundamental principles of Christ's kingdom, and can as little be ignored in assigning the subsequent conditions of pardon for the world, under his established reign, as can any other of the lofty utterances of that remarkable sermon. When "these sayings" shall have passed away, Christianity itself will be no more.

§ *3. Some Other Forms of Perpetuated Sin.*

Before proceeding to consider the application of these principles, it will be necessary to turn aside briefly to notice two phases of the subject, which present themselves at this point.

It will be observed that all perpetuated sins thus far considered, have possessed two features: They have been of such a character that it was (1) possible to *undo* the wrongs committed, and (2) it was possible to do this *in a short time.* But it is necessary to say that all perpetuated wrongs are not of this character.

In the first place, it is not always possible to undo a perpetuated wrong. The person who has been wronged may have died since the wrong was committed, or some disability may have been laid upon the man who has committed it. In this case the per-

petuated sin will pass into the class of *limited* sins, so far as concerns the ability to undo; and ability limits responsibility. But it will greatly differ in another respect: while the power to undo may have passed away, the injury may remain. Where this is the case, it will prove a great misfortune, not alone to the injured one, but also, and especially, to the penitent himself. It belongs to the very nature of repentance to desire to make reparation. It is moved to this by all the force of its inmost nature, and, if thwarted, it suffers deep and abiding pain. Its wings will beat helplessly against the bars of necessity, and it will fall back baffled and wounded. There is no hunger like that of foiled repentance. If the wrong has been a great one, it may cast a shadow over the entire life. Thus it was with King David, and with others mentioned in the pages of Sacred Writ. Often the penitent feels that, if the injured one could rise and smite him with condign punishment, it would be a relief—that the blow would bring him somewhat of peace and rest. Often, when his secret had been well guarded, and he was safe from discovery, has the offender rushed into confession, that he might stand before men as a criminal and bare his breast to the sword of civil justice, counting such suffering sweet, even though it could not repair the wrong done to the victim. Happy the penitent who may still bind up the wounds he has made, and tell his sorrow into the ear of the one he has wronged.

While the mercy of heaven is not closed against such a baffled repentance, the penitent is, nevertheless, exposed to a great danger. His repentance is deprived of its proper seal of genuineness in the making of reparation, and he is cast upon the uncer-

tainties of introspection. There is no subject wherein self-deception is more liable to exist, and probably more common, than in repentance. Yet a foiled repentance need not be wholly without witness. Does it feel this pain, this starved desire? Does it go out in holy yearnings to undo its wrong? Would suffering be welcomed, could it in any way repair the injury done? Then does it bear a mark of genuineness. But if there be no such pangs, no such yearnings? Let him who does not feel them beware!

But again, it may be possible to undo the wrong of a perpetuated sin, but it may require a *long time*—weeks, months, or even years—to do it. Here, also, ability limits responsibility, but in a different way. A man is responsible for doing *in the present* only what it is possible for him to do in the present. Let him do immediately all he can, purposing to do what remains as rapidly as possible. The man who does this discharges his full *present* duty, and may be forgiven. If, then, he remains true to his purpose, discharging in coming weeks and months (as was necessary in the case of Zaccheus) other portions of his obligation as rapidly as possible, he remains in the divine favor. But, if he foregoes his efforts before the work has been consummated, he renews the perpetuation of his sin, and falls again under the divine condemnation. It would be interesting and instructive to follow out Christ's dealings with cases of this kind, but such an examination would carry us beyond the bounds of our present investigation, which has for its object the consideration of that class of perpetuated wrongs which it is both possible to undo, and to undo speedily.

Returning from this digression, let us now proceed

to consider those fundamental principles of the divine government which we have found enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount, in their bearings on the sinner's conversion and acceptance with God.

A man is moved by the appeals of the gospel, and begins to think seriously regarding his condition. He sees his alienation from God in its true light, and becomes aware of its sinfulness and danger. He resolves to abandon his course, and, with much feeling and strong desire, falls on his knees to pray for pardon. Shall he be forgiven? Shall he be accepted to divine sonship then and there, and enrolled among the redeemed? Sentiment says, yes. Many people will say unhesitatingly, yes. But, in view of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, and the demands of moral right, can we so answer without further inquiry? Are we sure that this man's repentance has not been simply *religious*, without being also *moral?*

The great distinguishing characteristic, rising mountain high in both Judaism and Christianity, and marking them off from other religions, is that they have demanded not only the *religious*, but also the *moral*—and have demanded it in mighty tones. All heathen religions have required submission and piety toward their gods, but they have been lacking in the moral element. Let us be sure that our penitent has a *moral*, as well as *religious* conversion. Let us examine the case. On his hand raised to God in prayer there sparkles a jeweled ring. He has stolen it and might have returned it, but has not yet chosen to do so. He is therefore perpetuating the theft whose signet blazes upon the very hand stretched out for mercy. Shall he be forgiven? Or, perhaps, he

may not have done this, but he has defrauded his neighbor in a business transaction. The ill-gotten gain is in his pocket; he can return it, but has decided to let bygones be bygones. When it is said that this man's conversion is unmoral, how many conversions of our day stand impeached by the same indictment? How much restitution is ever made by the converts of modern revivals? How often is such a thing even *preached?* The modern conversion is supremely a *religious* conversion, and in too many cases leaves the great continent of human relations untouched, especially those of a commercial character. It is a conversion to a certain *divine* service and to the performance of certain *religious* duties, and is largely lacking in the moral element. Such a conversion is not only largely non-moral, but non-Christian. Will it be said that Christianity is already hard pressed, and that we cannot be too exacting with men without cutting off a large share of her following and destroying her prestige? She has, it must be admitted, in our brilliant civilization such a rival for the human heart as religion has never before encountered. The world has never been so fascinating, nor its claims so urgent. In the mad rush to seize its prizes, the masses little heed the voice of the church. Must she not, then, speak pleasant things to them and sue for their favor? When she enters upon this rivalry, she is already worsted—yea, and degraded too. If she will but use it, she holds in her hand a power over men which the world cannot claim—a tremendous power—the solemn voice of duty. We need Elijahs in our pulpits more than cushions in our pews. We may not *attract* the masses, but we may do better—we may *command* them. It is not when

she demands least of men that Christianity exerts most power over them, but when she requires most. It is claimed by some that the old theology is dead, and out of date; but charge home upon the conscience, and when it wakes from its drugged slumber it will see awful eyes looking out of the heavens, and hear the mutterings of distant thunder on a far-off shore. It is not too late to reason "of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come," and to make sinners tremble. Great truths lie written within upon the heart. Uncover that palimpsest and they shall burn there in letters of living light—a page so clear that none can gainsay, attesting the voice of revelation. I plead for a complete reinstatement of the moral element in conversion. While such an exaction may drive some from the church, it will endow her with a new power of mastery over the human heart. Christianity was never so mighty as when clothed with a terrible moral earnestness—never so masterful as when an Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead for a crooked transaction.

When a man comes to God offering himself upon the altar of divine service, if he has perpetuated sins which have not been brought to an end—if he has wronged his neighbor in word (Mt. v. 22) or deed, the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount demand that he shall stop! and go and make right those wrongs before he can hope for acceptance.

§4. *Did the Apostles Ignore This Principle in Their Work of Converting Men?*

We are here met by an important question: Did the apostles exact these conditions of men in their preaching of the gospel to the world? They did not need to do so with the Jewish people, for these condi-

tions were with them *self-executing*. The Jewish law demanded in the most explicit terms (Lev. vi. 1-7) that, in case of any wrong done against another, reparation should in all cases be made before any offering could be brought for it, and before there could be any divine forgiveness. For centuries not a wrong of this kind had been atoned for in any other way. Philo says that "when a man had injured his brother, and repenting of his fault, *voluntarily acknowledged it*, he was first to make restitution, and then to come into the temple, presenting his sacrifice and asking pardon."* The early Jewish converts did not understand that their law ceased to be binding; so that it was impossible that any Jew could for a moment think of finding acceptance with God until he had compounded for a wrong of this kind. This condition would, therefore, in the case of every Jewish convert, be self-executing. Moreover, Christ had endorsed and re-enacted this requirement, greatly enlarged it by extending its application to wrongs not before included under its provisions, and intensified its emphasis by stopping the offender in the very act of making his offering, and forbidding his approach to God till he had righted the wrong. Can we for a moment believe that the apostles accepted men, admitting them to salvation and all the honors of divine sonship, whose *status* was such that Christ declared them to be in "danger of hell-fire," and that no service from them could be accepted? In preaching to the heathen, the apostles, of course, gave them whatever instruction was found necessary, both on this and on other subjects.

But this is not simply a matter of teaching. A man

*Quoted from Bloomfield, *Com.*, Mt. v. 24.

in the throes of conviction, viewing things in the light of an awakened conscience, does not need to be told that he cannot be acceptable to a righteous God while he is holding out in a wrong against his brother, nor that, in delaying to make it right, when he might do so immediately, he is continuing to wrong him. It is simply a matter of moral intuition, and utters itself in tones of pain, and in voices of rebuke, in every awakened conscience. In the absence of false teaching regarding the divine clemency, such conditions would be self-executing in every case of true moral awakening. They simply belong to *genuine repentance*.

Cases requiring instruction on this point would not be common, but exceptional; and can we suppose that when the apostles met with them they failed to deal with them in accordance with the teachings of Christ? The gospel demands all this when it commands men to *repent*. He who teaches repentance faithfully will have few calls for instruction on this point.*

But this is not all. The first and overmastering impulse of a truly moral repentance—of the man who

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*If any one should be disposed to take a different view of this matter, he must hold this to be an exception to a general principle of the divine government. But, then, it would be a perilous exception, since it involves the violation of a law of moral right.

If it be thought strange that nothing should be said about this matter, either in the Commission given by Christ, or in the cases of conversion recorded in the Acts of Apostles, let it be considered that the same may be said of verbal confession of faith in Christ. It is not mentioned, either in the Commission, or in the statement of the conditions of salvation on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 38), or in the accounts of a large number of conversions recorded in the Acts (Acts viii. 37 is regarded as spurious), and yet who doubts that it was present, and was required by the apostles?

has been roused to a hatred of his sin—will not be to provide for his personal safety, but to rush out of his sin, to put it from him in moral abhorrence. On the contrary, the man whose fear of punishment has been chiefly excited, with but a feeble quickening of the moral nature, will instinctively rush to God for pardon, leaving moral adjustments for a later date. A modern view widely prevalent is that the sinner may, upon his repentance, come immediately to God for pardon, without the intervention of any act, leaving the undoing of any wrong till another time. I can only say that this is the course that a predominantly selfish repentance would instinctively pursue; while the repentance approved by Christ, towering high in its moral grandeur, will forget self till it has undone the wrongs that have broken its heart. Such are the movings of our moral nature. Are they not divine? Christ was not mistaken when he framed the law of divine approach in accordance with our *moral* rather than our *selfish* instincts. Had the gospel contained no condition to stop the man fleeing to God in selfishness for salvation, it would have been a grave blunder. These conditions form the assay of righteousness in conversion. Insist upon them, and you immediately restore conversion to all its moral grandeur.

CHAPTER II.

THE RELATION OF BAPTISM TO PERPETUATED SINS.

§1. A Perpetuated Sin of a General Character, and the Means of Terminating it.

We now approach a question of great importance to our investigation. Supposing that all wrongs which may have been committed against individuals, as pointed out in the last chapter, have been adjusted, is the way now open to the divine acceptance? Before answering this question it will be necessary to consider another fact regarding sin. There are sins of such character that they wrong, not simply one individual, but many, or even the world at large. Is there any such sin in the case before us? I answer, Yes.

During his past life our penitent has stood apart from Christ, withholding allegiance and refusing obedience to his commands, and the whole force of his example has tended to lead others to do so.* He may not have been engaged in active rebellion, but the case is such that neutrality is impossible; and Christ himself has declared that he who is not for him is against him. Such a life is a denial of Christ before the world.

The power of personal influence, whose strongest manifestation is in example, is the greatest of all forces in the shaping of human character. Beside it,

*This is the usual condition. Should a man obey the gospel as soon as it becomes known to him he would not incur the guilt of *rejection* of Christ, but it would still be necessary for him to correct a false position before the world, fraught with great harm.

as a determining force, reason and the demands of right sink into insignificance. It is the king of moral forces. Now, in the former life of our penitent this force has been against Christ. Be it little or great, the whole weight of his character has been on that side. In this he has wronged the world, and wronged Christ and his kingdom; and in the light of eternity his wrong has been a great one.

His life may have been highly moral, and may have even challenged the admiration of his fellows; if so, he has only with the greater power attracted—charmed men away from Christ. He may even, as with many moralists, have been fond of comparing his moral life with the lives of Christ's followers, to their supposed disadvantage. In this he has engaged in a rivalry against Christ's church, with a tendency to injure it and lessen its influence.

A wrong done to the world by means of a harmful example is regarded in the Scriptures as a *sin*. In I. Cor. viii. 10-12, a misleading example, even in minor matters, is declared to be a sin. What must it then be in a matter involving the eternal destiny of others? The sin of leading others to sin is not a light one. Christ says: "Whoso shall cause one of these little ones, which believe on me, to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh" (Mt xviii. 6, 7, R. V.). To cause one of Christ's followers to stumble and to keep a person from becoming his follower are sins of like character. The sin in each case is that of caus-

ing the ruin of a soul. How vast, how incalculable, the wrong done to such a one! Beside it many of the wrongs, and even crimes of the world, in point of harmfulness, sink into insignificance.

It is not easy to follow the burrowings of influence, nor to gauge its force, but there are certain facts which may give us hints of what is taking place in that invisible realm. Let every person of moral and respectable character in a community take his stand for Christ, leaving only the vile, the wicked and the debauched on the other side, and what tremendous odds it would place on the side of Christ in the minds of all young persons reaching the age of responsibility in that community! It would be well-nigh overwhelming. Those respectable people hold in their hands the eternal destiny of most of the youth of that community, and they will blast that destiny.

A bolt of lightning quivers in the air and strikes the earth; persons at some distance feel the shock: we call it induction. A man casts his life on the side of Christ; a shock for righteousness is felt throughout the community. With every such reversal the force for evil shrinks and the force for good bulks larger in the world. The moral atmosphere becomes purer and is surcharged with a stronger quickening power. Others often follow, and sometimes a large ingathering into Christ's kingdom results. That man had been keeping all those souls away from Christ. In the light of eternity, how great was the magnitude of his wrong!

Such, in his past life, has been the wrong of our penitent against the world, and against Christ and his kingdom. What it concerns us now especially to note, is the fact that that wrong is *still in full force.*

He has done nothing to undo it. He has repented, but the world does not know it. His life is still leading men away from Christ. He is still working the spiritual ruin of his fellowmen. He is still standing before the world against Christ. Was he committing a sin before by doing this? He is committing that same sin *now*. This wrong against the world will continue till he brings it to an end. It is a *perpetuated sin*. If he has never before known of Christ, his wrong position before the world has not till now become sinful, but he cannot now continue it without perpetuating a sin.

He is on his knees offering himself to God and suing for pardon. Shall he be forgiven? The teachings of the Sermon on the Mount demand that he shall STOP—go and make right his wrong, and then present his offering. He can do this quickly if he will, but resolves to do it *after a while*. Shall he be forgiven on a repentance which resolves to continue sin for a time? And shall God forgive this future sin in advance, thus *granting him an indulgence* to commit it? The thought is utterly opposed to the principles of the divine government as exemplified in both dispensations and most emphatically announced by Christ, and is equally repugnant to the fundamental principles of moral right.

It is a relief to feel that most of those who come to God, praying for pardon immediately on their repentance, do not realize the situation, and are not aware what they are asking God to do. But should they be allowed to remain ignorant of this monstrous oversight of the divine teaching and of moral consistency itself? To come to God for pardon while

perpetuating such a sin, is to ask him to perform an immoral act.

We are now ready to consider another question: How shall this wrong against the world and against Christ be undone? There is but one natural and necessary way—by PROFESSION. This reverses the moral force of the life upon the world. It is the only thing that can do it. Profession is as naturally fitted to undo this wrong as the return of stolen goods is to undo a theft. So far is it from being arbitrary that it is the only possible way of undoing such a wrong. No other way can even be imagined. *Profession, therefore, must be a condition of the divine pardon.* To such a conclusion are we irresistibly driven by the principles of the divine government laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, applied to the conditions of the case under consideration.

Let us now pause to ask one question: Did Christ regard those fundamental principles, laid down in his great sermon, as applying to this particular case? Are our reasonings justified by any direct statements from him and his apostles? In Mt. x. 32, 33, he says: "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

Here confession before men is made a condition of Christ's recognition before the Father, which is equivalent to the divine acceptance. In Rom. x. 9, 10, it is said that, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto right-

eousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Here the language is very definite, and all possibility of mistake is cut off by expressing the conditionality in two different ways. Just as surely as faith stands conditionally *before* righteousness, so surely does confession stand conditionally *before* salvation. The construction is precisely the same, and the two statements are parts of the same sentence. It is as impossible to place the salvation before the confession as to place the righteousness before the faith. The *order* is fixed in this sentence. In the preceding verse the faith and confession are bound together as conditions of the *same* salvation. Whatever salvation it be that is conditioned on faith, it is *that* salvation that is conditioned on confession. It is agreed that the salvation by faith is a salvation from sin. Confession therefore *goes before*, and is a *condition* of salvation from sin. That confession is a condition of *present* salvation is proved also by I. Jn. iv. 15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him and he in God." Here the result of the confession is stated in the present tense. Faith and profession, therefore, are steps bringing us into *present* union with God—a present salvation.

Such is the emphatic teaching of Scripture, according exactly with the fundamental law laid down in the Sermon on the Mount. But further, the very nobility of conversion itself requires that this should be so. Conversion should not be craven; it should be manly; it should be honorable. After having lived in disobedience to Christ before the world, shall the sinner creep in secretly through some back door and be saved? Would any manly soul desire to do so?

Should the gospel be so framed as to give encouragement to an unmanly conversion?

§2. *Baptism as a Means of Profession.*

But confession with the mouth is not all of profession. The word rendered "confess" has also the larger meaning of *profess*, and is sometimes so rendered. Nor does verbal profession fully answer the requirements of the case. It is, however, a necessary part of profession. The belief that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," cannot be fitly expressed without the use of words, although loyal conduct may show that Christ is regarded as worthy of obedience. The *conviction of the understanding* can only be adequately expressed in words giving in *completeness* and *definiteness* its content. Besides, the step which is to follow will require the co-operation of another, and a statement is necessary to inform him of the candidate's fitness to take it.

These are the important ends to be attained by confession, and they must always render it an indispensable part of profession; but the *soul's* part in this great transaction is reserved for other expression. As certainly as words are best fitted to express the convictions of the understanding, so certainly are they *not* fitted to express the profoundest emotions of the heart. Even in our earthly experiences there are things of the heart so deep that words seem but mockery. The step of the soul wherein it casts off forever its sinful past, gives itself in devout consecration to God, and lays hold on its Redeemer, can find fitting expression only in an act of solemn impressiveness, voicing its deep and holy meaning. There are crises in life so moving that words die upon the lips, and re-

fuse to be spoken; but there are none so moving as this great step of the soul.

This is not all; the wrong which it is the object of the penitent to undo by profession is not a trifling one, to be dismissed by a word. It has entered into the characters of his fellowmen; and it is a most painful fact that, do what he may, he may be unable fully to undo the mischief he has wrought. Shall he not do what he can? Acts speak louder than words. The spell of sin on his fellowmen is not easily broken. In the deafness of the world's unbelief, in the mighty roar of its great life, shall the convert but *whisper* his profession? With an express train thundering on to death, shall one but calmly say, as it dashes past him, "The bridge is broken"? Shall he not plant himself upon the track, wave the signal, and in every most effective way proclaim the peril? By nothing but a great and solemn act, burdened with the soul's awful meaning, can the penitent discharge his duty before his dying fellows. If such a holy necessity lie not upon his heart, his conversion is but selfish, and he is unworthy of the divine forgiveness. Moreover, to but half undo a wrong is to perpetuate it in part; that is, to prolong the sin.

For Christ not to have provided a strong voice of profession for the convert would have been to mock his own death. Words for him would have been easy, and they had their use, but only through the excruciating sufferings of the cross could love find its way to the heart of the world. In an ACT, an awful act, must his love tell its agony for men. The convert has also something to say to the world. With alarm for their danger, with strong and passionate yearning for their rescue, does he reverse his position before his

fellowmen. It is a deep thing of the heart; words cannot utter it, nor through them can it reach men with power.

The penitent stands in the waters of baptism. He sinks beneath their surface—DEAD, *dead to sin!* (Such is the utterance.) Buried from the old life *forever!* With a mighty voice he has recalled his old life of wrong-doing before the world, and *that* sin is ended. Shall he be pardoned? *Now, but not till now*, says the Sermon on the Mount. Having righted his wrong, he may now offer himself to God and be accepted. He is pardoned, and, as he rises to the new life, greetings of the heavenly world await him, while the Spirit of sonship rests upon him and fills him with a new joy, and a felt assurance which utters itself in the glad cry, "Abba, Father."

To such a conclusion are we led by the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, in their application to the conditions of the sinner's conversion. We lately paused to ask whether these principles were applied by Christ and his apostles to the matter of *profession*. Let us now pause to inquire whether they also applied them to the great and consummating act of profession, Christian *baptism*.* As the man who had wronged his brother could not offer an acceptable gift to God until he had first made right that wrong, so now

*It will hardly be necessary to offer any elaborate proof that baptism is an act of *profession*, as it is generally, if not universally, so regarded. The late Dr. Chas. Hodge, of Princeton, declares baptism to be "the appointed means of confession."

The *Methodist Episcopal Confession* speaks of it as "a sign of profession," while other great church symbols express the same thought in different language.

From the fact that, as a symbolic act, baptism *expresses* something, it becomes, by its very nature, an act of profession; and it was, in the apostolic age, and still continues to be, performed *as*

is it true that a man who is wronging the world by his standing apart from Christ cannot be accepted until he undoes that wrong by baptism? Is baptism a condition of the divine acceptance and the remission of sins? According to this principle of the divine government it must be so.

But are the Scriptures true to this principle? and, in formulating the law of salvation, do they so represent it?

Christ says in John iii.5, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In Acts ii. 38 it is said that repentance and baptism are "unto the remission of sins," and in Acts xxii. 16, under the figure of a washing, that baptism takes away sin; in Titus iii. 5, that we are saved by the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit"; and in I. Peter iii. 21, that baptism "saves" us. We are said to be "baptized into Christ" (Gal. iii. 27; Rom. vi. 3), and, in baptism, to "put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27); and we are told that through faith we become "sons of God" when we are "baptized into Christ" (Gal. iii. 26, 27). In Rom. vi.3-6 we are taught that in baptism we put off the old life and enter upon the new; and in Acts ii. 38 baptism is said to be a condition of the reception of the Holy

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publicly as confession with the mouth. It is, therefore, a public profession; and, when we take into account *what it is that it expresses*, it becomes at once clear that it must be *the* great act of Christian profession.

Confession with the mouth tells the story of the understanding; this tells the story of the heart. Baptism is *more* than profession, but it *is* profession—and the very *heart* of it.

In the Commission, as well as in a great number of conversions recorded in the Acts of Apostles, baptism is the only form of profession mentioned. This shows, not that verbal confession was not present, for it must have been, but that baptism was regarded as *the great act of profession*.

Spirit. Other passages might be mentioned, but the list need not be extended.

These references are so numerous, so definite, and so positive, that it is impossible to believe that any one who sees no difficulty in admitting that baptism is a condition of the remission of sins should for a moment hesitate to regard this as the teaching of the Scriptures. I am aware that means have been found to break the force of these passages, but many of the methods are so violent that hardly a passage in the whole Bible could stand before them. The doctrine that faith itself is a condition of salvation is not supported by an array of Scripture more positive and definite.

But, even if it were possible to dispose of all these passages, the doctrine that a man may be pardoned immediately on his repentance, while delaying his profession, would have yet to encounter insuperable difficulties. That baptism should be a condition of the remission of sins is not an arbitrary requirement, alien to the general spirit of Christianity, but is only one out of many applications of a far-reaching principle of the divine government, exemplified in both dispensations, and announced with great emphasis by Christ in his greatest sermon. Moreover, that a man should be pardoned while continuing to stand in a sinful position before the world, is a violation of a clear principle of moral right, and both vitiates the repentance and implicates God in the wrong of granting an indulgence to sin.

So largely is conversion, in modern times, regarded as a matter of sentiment, and so greatly have measures to work upon the feelings predominated, that the very existence of such a sin as this has been well

nigh overlooked, and the means appointed to undo it have come to appear strange and out of place. Conversion should not less profoundly lay hold on the feelings, but it must be also *moral*. It cannot ignore the solidarity of mankind. Sin has both a manward and a Godward side. Any conversion which fails to adjust both these relations must be defective, and cannot be acceptable to a righteous God. The modern view, widely prevalent, would retain profession (confession and prayer) *before God*, but reject profession *before men* as an antecedent condition of divine acceptance. The Bible demands *both*. There is crying need of a revival of the moral in conversion and in the Christian life. Conversion is the foundation of that life, and the revival must begin there, or it cannot be elsewhere. The whole question of the manward side of conversion is largely a forgotten gospel. Repentance has lost its peculiar seal of genuineness—restitution, reparation—and the church has forgotten to demand the undoing of social wrongs, while a sinful position before the world is thought to be no bar to the divine acceptance. The *perpetuated sin*, and all that appertains to it, has well nigh passed out of the cognizance of the church of modern times. Put back into conversion the moral element in its completeness, and Christianity will wield a new power over men. In the moral resides the chief credential of her divinity. When she begins again to work moral miracles, she will be irresistible.

Baptism has a great moral reason behind it. A wrong against the world and against Christ is to be undone; a sinful position before the world is to be abandoned. The nature of this wrong is such that

this can be done only by profession. Profession with words cannot adequately meet the requirement. A great and solemn act alone can voice the soul's profound meaning and fitly carry it to the world. Something bearing all the characteristics of baptism would be necessary at this point, even though Christ had not commanded it. Baptism is not arbitrary, but a natural and effective way of undoing such a wrong. It is the *best* way, and has therefore been appointed by Christ as *the* way.

The necessity for a positive requirement at this point has been abundantly demonstrated by the past history of the church. The tendency to err here has been so strong that even Christ's *definite command* has been perverted through the influence of great errors. Had the law of baptism—the principle which demands it—been faithfully adhered to, it would have held the church to such a standard of spirituality as to have rendered the dark and degraded past impossible. It would have changed the history of the world for the last eighteen centuries.

It may be added, that while it is possible to make profession in more than one way, Christ has chosen the *best* way, and, for wise reasons, embodied it in a positive command. In view of this fact, he who adopts some other method is guilty of disobedience and unworthy of the divine acceptance.

Baptism has been said to effect a "change of state." This is true, but it is but a part of the truth, and fails to take account of its great spiritual and moral uses. Whether a person shall enter the marriage state, or become a citizen of a certain government, is a matter entirely optional with him. Not so with baptism. It is more than a change of state; as an act

of profession it is the abandonment of a sinful position before the world; it is the termination of a wrong against the world and against Christ and his kingdom. It is not a mere formality, nor is it a simply useful *legal* act. It is a *moral* act, and a moral act of such nature that he who delays it is perpetuating a sin against the world, and against Christ, and is therefore unworthy of the divine pardon.

It may be thought a matter of small importance whether this wrong before the world be undone before or after the pardon, if it be only undone soon. If it be but a small matter, why be particular to settle it wrong? It is better to have a small matter right than wrong. But to settle this question by belittling it, is to descend from the region of the moral to that of the politic. Christianity cannot afford to adopt the methods of the politician. Moreover, this is quite as important a matter as that mentioned in Mt. v. 22-24, which, Christ taught, must cut off all acceptable approach to God. The wrong order in this case, though probably involving less than an hour's time, is strictly forbidden, and would be fatal to the acceptance.

If baptism be the undoing of a wrong—the putting away of a sin—it follows that it must succeed repentance *immediately*. This is not an optional matter, to be determined by one's convenience or inclination. It is a *moral duty*. The bond that links baptism immediately to repentance is a *moral* one.

In perfect accord with this, we find that such was the practice in the apostolic age. In the Acts of Apostles everywhere we find that it was the practice of the primitive church to administer baptism immediately on repentance. And here we have a striking

confirmation of the position taken in this discussion. Not only does the entire language of the Scriptures, on the subject of baptism, fall into line and prove the most happy expression of our conclusions, but we find that the *practice* which our argument shows to be necessary was the very practice of the apostles. This is not true of the modern view regarding baptism. Not only is much of the language of the Scriptures on the subject discarded from use, but the practice itself is strikingly different. Baptism is not spoken of *as* it was then, nor performed *when* it was then. Why this change both of language and practice, unless it be that the modern view is not that of the apostles?

When Christ framed the law of pardon for his kingdom, there were several moral conditions to be met. Among them, these three: (1) Profession was necessary to put an end to one of the great sins of the former life. (2) As this profession was designed to influence others through throwing the weight of one's character on the side of Christ and his kingdom, it was necessary that it should be made in a profoundly impressive manner—by some act adequately voicing the mighty meaning of the heart. A weak form of profession must leave the mischief half undone. (3) No time should be allowed to elapse between the offering of one's self to God and profession. A delay, however short, unless unavoidable, would involve a continuance in sin. If found possible, *moral law demanded that some strong act of profession should be appointed to take place* AT THE VERY TIME *when the soul offered itself up to God*, thus cutting off delay, and terminating continuance in sin at that point. This *was* deemed possible, and just this has

been done. According to divine appointment, the soul puts on Christ and makes a profession of his name in the very same act. The apostle says: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). So in Rom. vi. 5, Mt. xxviii. 19, etc. The act by which union with Christ is formed is the act by which profession is made. There can be but one question. If it be *possible* for one to make a profession at the very time that he offers himself up to God—and it is, and the Scriptures so regard it,—it is immoral for him not to do so, for delay is simply a continuance in sin; and any pardon under such conditions must also be immoral. In the apostolic age baptism was administered on the spot—as soon as the subject was ready to give himself up to Christ. Moral law demands that it should be so, and that pardon should then be granted.

Thus Christ's framing of the law of pardon was in perfect accord with the demands of moral law; while the modern view, by which a man offers himself up to God as a naked spiritual act, and is then pardoned while continuing in sin—the sin of non-profession—involves a clear violation of moral law.

But there is one other point to be considered. Even when profession is promptly made, there will still be a *little* time between repentance and the act of profession. If the penitent is not *delaying* profession, but proceeding to attend to it as speedily as possible, it cannot be said that he is then committing any wrong. Though the old wrong has not yet been undone, he is proceeding to undo it as rapidly as possible, and *morally* is not continuing in sin. May he not, then, receive pardon at this point? To grant him pardon here would not be a *direct* violation of

moral law; but there are important reasons, and even a *moral* reason, why it should not be done. To place pardon at this point would have the effect to discount the whole matter of profession and lead to its neglect. What is considered of minor importance is very likely to be omitted or delayed; and to omit or delay profession is to continue in sin.

The belief that pardon precedes profession has had just this effect throughout the Christian world. The great act of profession has been reduced to the level of a ceremony, and has been taken out of conversion and placed somewhere on in the Christian life, while profession itself is popularly regarded as a matter of secondary importance if the heart only be right, and deferred to suit the convert's convenience or inclination. Nor does the mischief of this way of viewing things end here. The whole sense of obligation to undo old wrongs has largely faded from the popular mind. Modern repentance generally pauses at putting a stop to the positive commission of sin, without reparation of the past, and is therefore morally defective; for an unrepaired past is no less damnable than a sinful present. Modern sentimentalism, in its weakening of moral obligations, is not a healthy phase of thought; and it is this that takes offense at baptism as a condition of remission of sins. Archbishop Trench says that repentance was "a far more serious thing in the early church" than it is now—and with good reason; for divine acceptance was not then thought to depend on a simple state of feeling, but old wrongs had to be undone before the sinner was welcomed to the divine favor.

Thus there is a grave moral reason why the gospel should not place the bestowment of pardon before

profession. It encourages a view of things fraught with serious moral consequences. It weakens the moral power of the gospel by removing reparation from among the antecedent conditions of divine acceptance, and favors habits of thought that tend to make repentance superficial. The "method of inwardness" can be overdone.

The principle here enunciated finds fitting illustration in a decision of the Apostle Paul. Was it right for Paul to eat meat offered to idols? Yes, and no. The eating of the meat was not in itself wrong, but it would lead others to do wrong; and this fact made it wrong,—Paul says, a *sin* (I. Cor. viii. 12, 13). Would it be right for God to ordain that pardon shall be bestowed just before profession? Yes, and no. The pardon itself would not be a violation of moral law if the penitent were proceeding to make profession without delay, but the effect of such a provision would be to *cause* men to delay, which would be a continuance in sin; and this fact would render the provision immoral in tendency. The law of pardon should not be so framed as to cause men to continue in sin, even for a short time.

Christianity makes the undoing of all wrongs, whenever possible, a condition of divine acceptance. Baptism as a condition of remission of sins is but one of the applications of this law. And all this is as it should be.

PART II.

SPIRITUAL NATURE AND USES OF BAPTISM

Division I.

BAPTISM AS A SPIRITUAL ACT.

CHAPTER I.

BAPTISM ANSWERS TO A NEED OF THE HEART.

When Christ reclined at meat in the house of Simon the Pharisee a woman that was a sinner entered bearing an alabaster box of ointment, and, standing behind him weeping, began to wash his feet with her tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment. No word had as yet been spoken, but there was a frown on the Pharisee's face. Christ, perceiving this, addressed him, and, referring to the act of the woman, proceeded to give him one of his most searching lessons. Then, turning to the woman, he pronounced her sins forgiven.

Facts are great teachers, and this touching incident is like a jewel flashing its light from many facets.

Christ drew forth one of its lessons. Let us consider another. In order to do this, let us try to understand the nature of this woman's act.

Let us notice, in the first place, that it had not been *commanded*. It was not done under the stress of authority. It was purely *spontaneous*. Let us observe, also, that it was not an act of *utility*. She sought in

it no benefit to herself, and expected to confer none upon Christ. It was simply an act of *expression*. Let us note, also, that it was done in the face of *obstacles*. She knew that she would not be welcome in the house of the Pharisee, and that her presence would be considered a contamination, and would excite his anger. Yet she broke through all these obstacles to perform the act. There was some strong force behind it. It was by a whirlwind of the heart that she was carried to the feet of Christ.

We have here, therefore, a *spontaneous* act of *expression*, done under the force of a deep *heart-necessity*. Before inquiring its significance, let us observe further that this act does not stand alone, but is only one of a sisterhood of similar acts to be met with in all ages and in all climes, and springing from a divinely implanted law of the human heart.

As you stand in the presence of death, what means the eager kiss that you press upon the dear cold face? It is not *commanded;* it is not *useful*. You may be very poor, but you divide your loaf that you may provide a casket in which the cold form of your loved one may be laid. You cover it with flowers and leave its jewels upon it. You hire carriages to bear it to the city of the dead, and tenderly, reverently, and in holy sorrow, lay it to rest. Every town has its *white city*, whose monuments are only useful as expressions of love.

Lately a princess was watching at the bedside of her little child, dying of diphtheria. "Kiss me, mamma," said the little one. The conflict in the mother's breast was a short one. She bent, and, with swimming eyes, pressed her lips to those of her dying babe, and drank the fatal poison that was to cost her her life. What

theology is this? Who taught that baby to yearn for that simple rite of love? And who laid upon the mother's heart a necessity to give it that was stronger than life? Ah! this is holy ground; God is here.

The need for acts of expression is not confined to the more passionate emotions. The modern nations are cold and practical, but *hand-shaking* is well-nigh universal. True, it is a custom, but it has nothing in it of the tyranny of custom, and can be omitted without any breach of etiquette. It is simply a matter of inclination, and it exists only because the human heart beats beneath it. Free and unconstrained, it is a genuine expression of the heart's true feeling. Its existence shows that God has implanted in us a craving for such expression.

Now, what is the explanation of all this? It means that words are not sufficient to satisfy the needs of the heart. The feeling overflows them into action—and that, the action of *expression*. Such is the voiced need of the soul.

But the kiss of affection and the hand-shake are more than simple acts of expression. They are acts of *communion* as well—of spiritual commerce—of the interflow of souls. They are the rushing together of two personalities, and they impart a sense of *togetherness* that words cannot compass. Explain it as you may, such acts are avenues of personal nearness, which are universally *craved*, *needed* and *used*; and they will endure as long as the human heart continues to feel. It is not true, however, that an abundance of forms and ceremonies is demanded by the laws of the human soul. They can never be filled by the heart, and tend to the cultivation of formalism and hypocrisy. Ritualism, whether in society or religion, is not conducive

to a healthy heart-life; but a few simple acts, such as lie close to the soul's true life, will continue to be demanded as long as love itself shall endure.

So great is this need, that the effort to deny the heart these natural outflows of its life into acts of expression, tends to stifle the affections themselves from which they spring, and in no life are such acts entirely absent that is not already frozen in selfishness. As our chief method of overcoming temptation is to deny evil desires their gratification, so the denial of the nobler spontaneities of our nature tends to weaken and wither them.

The case of the "woman that was a sinner" was a case of conversion. We know this because Christ pronounced her sins forgiven. She had heard the words of Christ, and they had stirred her at strange depths. His very presence had awakened in her a suspicion of divinity. There had been strange movings in her soul. The lame Lemnian was turning uneasily beneath her mountain load of sin. Night had come, but she had not slept. Like a voice from the tomb, the tones of conscience were heard pealing forth their menace. She had sought peace by hushing them, but chords had been struck which could never again be still. The powers of two worlds were in conflict within her soul. There is battle, and, at last, the victory of repentance.

A new passion has mastered. A new life has risen up. It is sunrise in her dark heart,—the first her blind eyes have ever seen,—a glorious, new surprise of being. She cannot speak. Words seem mockery. And now she has a new hunger—to pour out her soul in an act of silent gratitude at the feet of her Redeemer. She seeks her opportunity; she rushes in; she

does it. Christ blesses it—she has found heaven.

But what of others who shall in like manner travel this way during the centuries to come? As *they* gain the new victory, and thrill with the new life, shall *they* not also feel the new hunger for an act of consecration? But there are now no longer any blessed feet to clasp, or any voice to declare their sins forgiven. The Master is no longer here. Where shall now the answer be to this cry of the new-born life? Shall our human loves find their longed-for expression, while the cravings of this divine one are stifled?

There is an answer—*Baptism*. In it the soul may fall at Christ's feet in holy love and self-commitment, breaking the sweet alabaster box of the heart there. It is no empty formality, but its foundations lie deep in the needs of the human soul—needs that rise importunate at this period of the soul-history.

Nor has baptism only its human side, like the passionate kiss upon the cold face of the dead. It is an act of spiritual interflow, a rushing together of two personalities. The penitent is "baptized *into* Christ," and Christ, in his Spirit, comes *into the soul*, and bestows the assurance of sonship and of remission. A *togetherness* is reached more intimate than that of any human relation; *we in him* and *he in us*. Peter declares on the day of Pentecost that this meeting and uniting with Christ (in the reception of the Holy Spirit) in baptism is the way divinely ordained for all time and for all peoples.

Thus a real heart-need in reaching God is satisfied, and baptism appears as no arbitrary appointment, but the answer to a new-born hunger in the soul.

Will it be said that modern nations are cold and practical, and do not feel this need? Let it be remem-

bered that a cold and practical conversion is not a Christian conversion. This commercial age cannot transform conversion into a business transaction. Salvation is not a bargain. Unless there be a spiritual quickening, there can be no conversion. Besides, modern nations are not so cold and practical that they dispense with all social rites of human affection. He who feels no such need in his conversion has grave cause for self-examination.

To take baptism out of its *proper place* is to deprive the heart of the answer to a felt need, and render the ordinance in large part useless, transforming it into an empty formality. When the father saw the returning prodigal afar off, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him, had the embrace and the kiss been denied in the greeting, the deprivation would have been painful. The greeting would have but mocked his feelings, and, in its coldness, been false to the situation. If, then, the embrace and passionate kiss had come six months later, it would have been little better than an empty formality, equally repellant to both parties.

Such a misplacing of baptism is responsible for much of the disregard in which it is held. Robbed of its natural uses, and placed in unseemly positions, it loses its hold upon the human heart, and clings to Christianity as a useless appendage, held there only by force of divine authority; tolerated for Christ's sake rather than welcomed as an answer to a deep spiritual yearning. It thus becomes a stumbling block alike to the reason and to the heart, and a bone of contention in the church.

What a pity that this holy trysting-place of the soul with Christ should have become the battle-field of

centuries, until the very word smells of the smoke of battle! Is there nothing too sacred for the battle-ax? When shall the grass grow again on this Gettysburg of the ages? When shall birds sing there again, and its beauty and loveliness return? When shall this word become again one of the most beautiful in language?

Simple immersion does not suffice to restore the primitive baptism. Not until its investiture with its old associations and tenderness can baptism, rendered holy by the sublimest emotions of the human heart, be again what it was in the days of the apostles.

CHAPTER II.

BAPTISM NOT A MERE OUTWARD ACT.

"Views of baptism as a mere external and bodily act exert a very injurious influence on the understanding and practice of men."—*Alexander Campbell.*

PROBABLY the most fertile of all sources of error in reasoning is that of false definition, and that a definition may tyrannize over whole ages of thought, is one of the remarkable facts of history.

It has been common to speak of baptism as "a mere outward act," and in this light it is, no doubt, generally regarded. From this estimate certain conclusions naturally follow, which render it necessary to place strained interpretations on various passages of Scripture, and which require baptism to occupy a very different place in the divine economy from that assigned to it in the apostolic church. If, therefore, this estimate be not a correct one, it is far from harmless.

§ *1. The Nature of a Mere Outward Act.*

Let us now look carefully into the meaning of the phrase "a mere outward act." There can be no doubt that the contortions of the epileptic are mere outward acts, that is, the mind has nothing to do with them; they are purely physical. Again, a man in his sleep may fall into the water and be rescued by another. Here, also, we have a mere outward act. The man's mind has nothing to do with it. But, if asked whether or not this is baptism, every one would answer unhesitatingly, No. Even though the immersion were administered in all due form, it would not alter the case; nor would it matter by whom performed,

if the candidate be unconscious no one would accord to it the dignity of baptism. Thus it appears that the physical act may possess every possible perfection, and yet we are immediately conscious that it is not Christian baptism.

Perhaps it may be claimed that baptism itself is a mere outward act, but that it stands *related* to certain spiritual activities of the soul. I shall not stay to show the confusion of thought involved in such a statement, but will simply say that the act itself can not be merely external, as will appear from another example. A sailor dives into the sea, rises to the surface and returns to his boat. What kind of act is this? Just *what* has taken place? It is plain that there has been an immersion. But this is not all: there has been a conative act of the mind—an act of the will. There has been more, but I am at present concerned only with this. Without this, there could have been no diving; and this mental act does not simply stand *related* to the immersion, but the two form *one act*. Suppose you are told that the man was unconscious. You will at once say that he did not *dive*, but *fell* in; that is, it ceases to be an act, and becomes an accident. The mental act is necessary to the very conception of diving—a part of the very meaning of the word. Take that out, and you cannot apply the word *dive* to the act; and what is true of this is true of every other word implying agency. In short, it is simply impossible for an intelligent agent to perform "a mere outward act." Take the mental factor out of it, and it may take place by some other means, but it can in no sense whatever be his act. There are acts that are purely mental, or spiritual, and there are acts that are both mental and

physical, but there are no merely physical acts in human agency. Every act of an intelligent agent has its mental factor, which is necessary to its very existence, and forms a part of the act itself, and of the meaning of the word which designates it.

Christian baptism is the act of an intelligent agent, and therefore must have its mental factor, which is necessary to, and forms a part of, the act itself. There is more of the Mississippi River than at that point where it billows into the sea. Far up among the mountains it is still the Mississippi. There is more of baptism than what passes into sight. It reaches into the sublimest altitudes of the soul, and is baptism there as truly as where it leaps into the visible.

To return to the case of the sailor. Externally, his act is immersion; internally, it may be any one of many mental acts, moral, immoral, or indifferent. It may be merely sportive, or it may be to save another's life, or something else. Were it any of these, notwithstanding the immersion, it could not be baptism, for the reason that none of them constitutes that specific mental act which forms the spiritual part of baptism.

We stand now face to face with—what? For centuries the question, What constitutes visible baptism? has been hotly discussed, and an extensive literature has grown up about it; but, What constitutes the spiritual half of baptism? Where is the literature on this? Where is the book on it? Nay, if the question be asked, how many can answer it? And yet, it is speaking very moderately to say that this question is, at least, as important as the other. The spiritual part of baptism—what is it? What is its character; what, its status; what, its importance? It is a ques-

tion of great moment. But before answering this, there is another question which claims our attention.

§ 2. *A Question in Philology.*

It is well known that the word representing baptism, in the Greek language, signifies simply a *dipping*, or *immersion*, of objects, animate or inanimate, and with no regard to how it is brought about. It may be simply a physical occurrence. Why, then, should the word have, in the New Testament, a larger meaning? It is only necessary to say that this comes about through a well known law of language: viz., that when words are appropriated from a general to a specific use they take on added and specific meanings. To illustrate: The English word *elder* means simply an older person; but, when used to designate an officer in the church, it signifies much more. The amount of the added meaning it thus gains will be found embraced in the description of the qualifications and duties of an elder. In like manner, the Greek word πρεσβυτερος (translated "elder") meant, in its classical use, simply an *older man*; but, as applied to an officer in the primitive church, it took on a volume of additional and specific meaning embraced in Paul's description of the qualifications and duties of that officer. The same is true of the word *alderman*, from the Anglo-Saxon, which originally signified simply an *older man*. A striking example of this law is presented in the word *Christ*. Χριστὸς, the Greek word for Christ, means simply *anointed*; and ὁ Χριστὸς (the Christ), simply one who has been anointed, or taken an oil bath, so common in our sanitariums. Now, when applied to designate the Savior of men, what an enormous increment of meaning this word receives! From a mustard seed, it rises to a vast tree,

lifting its boughs to heaven and sheltering in its branches the nations of the earth. Who can tell how much the word *Christ* means to the world to-day?—how much to the Christian?—how much to the dying saint? To compass its meaning, you must exhaust the Scriptures, sweep through the vast fields of human experience, unravel the history of nineteen centuries, and even ascend into heaven and learn the seraphic import of that Name which is above every other name.

As were these words, so was baptism appropriated from a general to a specific, religious use, and, by the same law of language, took on additional meaning. That meaning will be found embraced in the descriptions of the act, and the use of the word, in the New Testament.

To cut the word *elder* down to the simple meaning of an *older man* would be to ignore the office of the eldership; to restrict the word *alderman* to the general meaning of an *older man* would be to ignore the aldermancy; to cut the word *Christ* down to the measure of its classical signification, as a person who has been anointed, or taken an oil bath, would be to sweep Christianity out of existence. In like manner, to cut *baptism* down to its mere classical signification of immersion, is to sweep Christian baptism out of existence.

The long and heated controversy of centuries regarding the physical meaning of the word has fixed attention almost exclusively upon that point, and done much to educate the public mind in material conceptions of baptism. This mischief can only be undone by a long and persistent setting forth of the lofty spiritual meanings which the word received on its adoption into the family of Christian terms.

CHAPTER III.

THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT IN BAPTISM.

§ *1. The Final Spiritual Step in Conversion.*

We saw in the last chapter (1) that baptism is not a mere outward act, and (2) that it is possible for immersion to be the outflow of certain *mental acts*, and still not constitute Christian baptism. It is the task of the present chapter to discover *what is that specific mental act, which, conjoined with immersion in water, constitutes Christian baptism.*

In order to do this, let us first take our stand within the soul, and notice what are the necessary *mental* steps taken in conversion.

The *onus* of the evangelistic preaching of the apostles was the demonstration of the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus. It was their first object to produce a belief of this fact. When, therefore, the hearer had come to believe this, he had taken the first step in his conversion. Repentance, the second step, may be defined as a spiritual change issuing in a resolution to become a follower of Christ.

Now, do these two steps, belief and repentance, comprise *all* the *mental* steps which constitute conversion? I answer, they do not. The *resolution* to take Christ is not *taking* Christ. The act of *resolving* to do a thing, is not *doing* it. This is as true of mental acts, as of those usually regarded as physical. A man may resolve to apply his mind to the study of a particular subject, yet he may not do the studying till long after. The same holds true regarding certain steps involving an exercise of the will. They

may be decided upon before they are taken. Nay, they must be. The hearts of two young persons become changed toward each other, and they resolve to take each other as husband and wife; but they have not yet done so, *even mentally*. When the clergyman marries them, he does not ask them if they *have already* taken each other as man and wife—some time before. He knows they have not, and therefore says, "*Do* you take this woman?" and, "*Do* you take this man?" etc. They have not yet taken this step, *even mentally*, although they may have long ago resolved to do so; and they can never be married without taking it. Any ceremony would be invalid, if one of the parties were unconscious, and that, simply because the mental step could not be taken. Marriage involves an act of the will, and yet it may be, nay, must be, decided upon before the step is taken.

A man may repent of his sins, and resolve to become a follower of Christ; but he has not yet done so. The *resolution* to take Christ is not *taking* him. The man needs to reach the point where he shall say, not simply, "I *will* take Christ," but where he shall say to Christ, "I *now* come to thee, taking thee as my Savior, and consecrate myself to thy service."

These steps are not the same, but mark successive stages in the process of conversion. The one is *purpose;* the other is *fact*. Conversion is not atheistic—a mere turning to right in the abstract—but has to do with a personal God; and entrance into covenant with God cannot be accomplished by any mere "change of purpose," however worthy. The mental act of *forming a purpose* and the mental act of *giving one's self to another* may stand related as cause and effect, but they cannot be the same. The one is *in-*

dividual, the other *social;* the one takes place *within one's self*, the other takes place *in connection with another.*

These two steps stand out clearly in the conversion of the Prodigal Son. His repentance took place within himself and reached its consummation in the saying, "I will arise and go to my father." The next step occurs after he has reached his father, and consists in his *contrite self-commitment* and *plea for acceptance;* and could only take place in the presence of, and in relation to, his father. The first step was *individual;* the other was *social.* The first found its expression in *soliloquy*—speech to one's self: the other found its expression in *colloquy*—speech to another. They are both equally steps of the MIND, but they are different in nature and in the time of their occurrence, though taking place as nearly together as circumstances would permit. The *mental* steps of the prodigal's return to a better life did not end with his *repentance*, but with his *covenanting.* These steps stand clearly related to each other, but they are by no means the same. Both are alike mental acts and spiritual steps in conversion; but one is *individual*, the other *social.* One takes place *within one's self;* the other *goes out to another.* The one is *cause;* the other *effect.* The one *precedes;* the other *follows.* The one is *purpose;* the other *fact.* One brings *to the threshold* of a new life; the other takes *into it.*

The distinction between these two steps is recognized in the phraseology of Scripture. Paul says (Acts xxvi. 20) that he has taught everywhere, that men should "repent and turn to God." "Repent AND turn"—two distinct acts. The repentance is *within one's self*, terminating in purpose. The turning TO

God is *social*—the going forth of the mind *to* another. The acts are equally spiritual, but they are different.

Other passages make a similar distinction, and indicate that repentance is regarded as stopping just short of a pivotal step, which constitutes the *final* spiritual turning-point in conversion—the *mental actualization* of the *purpose* of repentance, an actual coming to God.

If we consider this turning to be an *overt* act, it remains no less a *mental* act. Bereft of its mental factor, it could be nothing more than a meaningless form. Nay, it would cease even to be an *act* at all.

This final step—this mental act—looks in many directions. It is a *self-giving* and a *Christ-taking*. As regards the old life, it is a *leave-taking;* as regards the new, an *embracing*. As regards the promised blessings of pardon and divine indwelling, it is a *prayer* for these—a *seeking*. It is an act full of aspiration, resolve, emotion, prayer. It is the consummating spiritual step of conversion, to which the belief and repentance have been leading up, and without which they must fail of their object. It is the blossom on the tree of an awakened heart, and the prophecy of a life of holy fruitage. It is the epochal act of the human spirit, from which date all its sublime heroisms and all its divine activities. It is the mighty event of the soul, stirring its holiest emotions to their profoundest depths.

§ 2. *The Divinely Appointed Investiture of this Spiritual Step.*

Such an act, by a deep instinct of our nature, will

seek external embodiment, and will gain thereby greater definiteness and power.

Everywhere, and in all ages, strong emotions of love, great acts of dedication, and important acts of covenant, have taken on external form, in accordance with a universal law of human nature demanding it. This great spiritual act belongs to all these classes, and exemplifies them in the highest degree.

Let us now ask the questions: What is this act *called* in the Scriptures? and has it been provided with any external embodiment? Can it be found represented by any gospel term? and have the demands of its nature for embodiment been satisfied?

In I. Pet. iii. 21, the apostle declares that baptism is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God" (R. V.). The common version reads "answer" instead of "interrogation," and the literal meaning of the original is an *asking*. With the interpretation of this passage I am not at present concerned, further than to notice that, according to any of these readings, baptism is here declared to be a *mental* as well as a physical act, and that the mental part is the *very heart* of it. The terms "answer," "interrogation," and "asking" all express acts of the *mind*. Baptism was therefore regarded in the apostolic age as a *mental* as well as a physical act. Again, when speaking of its purpose, it was the habit of the New Testament writers to follow the word *baptize* by the preposition *eis* (*into*), indicating that it was an act of transition—a mental step forward into something wherein the person did not before stand. The penitent is said to be baptized *into* Christ, *into* the remission of sins, etc. Whatever it may mean to be "in Christ," that

condition is said to be reached in baptism. But that spiritual goal can only be reached by a *spiritual* step; therefore baptism is a *spiritual* step—the journey of the soul "into Christ."

In Gal. iii. 27, it is spoken of as a *putting on* of Christ, as a garment: "For, as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ."

It is also represented as a burying away from the old life and a rising to the new (Rom. vi. 3-5.) It is said to be "the interrogation [literally, *asking*] of a good conscience toward God" (I. Pet. iii. 21). When comparing this language with another statement of Peter (Acts ii. 38), we are probably safe in concluding, with Lange, that baptism is a *prayer of the soul* for pardon and divine acceptance—for a conscience freed from its sense of guilt. If so, what more natural than that it should be followed by the remission of sins? I may add that it is not simply an *single act* of obedience, but that, in its consecration, it holds capsulate *all* obedience.

All these Scriptures describe something that, in its very nature, is a *mental act*, and declare precisely what that act is. Do they declare the literal truth, or, as with many, must the language be interpreted symbolically? This will be more fully considered in another place, but it may here be said that such a view involves difficulties of interpretation of the gravest character, and results in the practical exclusion from use of the great body of the language of the Scriptures on the subject of baptism. The Scriptures declare that baptism is not a mere outward act—a mere washing of the body, or cleansing of "the filth of the flesh"—but a spiritual act, and a spiritual act of a particular character, which they definitely describe.

What have we now found? That the Scriptural description of baptism on its subjective side corresponds exactly to the third spiritual step in conversion, as viewed from the standing-point of the soul's necessary experience; that baptism is, in short, the Scriptural *name* for that great spiritual step. We see also that, according to the universal demand of human nature regarding such mental acts, it has been provided with an external embodiment—fitting, beautiful, impressive. All is just as it should be from the standpoint of unvarying spiritual laws. Had it been otherwise, Christianity would have had a blemish. We see also, taken all in all, within and without, how glorious a thing Christian baptism is.

If baptism be this high and epochal spiritual step in conversion,—a covenanting with God, the spiritual grasp of the divine hand, the laying hold on a better life, and the consecration of self to God,—some important conclusions must follow:

We shall no longer be surprised that the gospel commission makes it, equally with faith, a condition of salvation (Mark xvi. 16). We see that it should be so. We shall not wonder that, on the day of Pentecost, it is, equally with repentance, declared to be a condition of the remission of sins. We see that it must be so, if baptism be one of the spiritual steps of conversion. In a word, the high and epochal character assigned to baptism in the New Testament no longer strikes us strangely, but is felt to be natural and necessary.

Finally, if baptism be a *mental-physical* act, a *single* act, consisting on its mental side of a *self-giving* and *Christ-taking*, and on its physical side, of *immersion in water*, it follows that the whole act should be per-

formed at one time; and such was the invariable practice in the days of the apostles, even if need be at "the same hour of the night" (Acts xvi. 33). When the soul is ready for the mental step, it is time for its physical embodiment. To separate the external of baptism from its true connection, is to cancel its usefulness. As Prof. Drummond has argued, separation from environment is death. With baptism it is so. It is practically *baptiz-icide*. I shall speak further of this in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

CONSEQUENCES OF REGARDING BAPTISM AS A MERE OUTWARD ACT.

In the last chapter, I endeavored to show that baptism is a spiritual-physical act, embracing the last and consummating spiritual step in conversion, and that, by its very nature, it must not only succeed repentance, but precede divine acceptance and remission of sins—the position accorded to it in the Scriptures.

Suppose, now, that we assume baptism to be a mere external act, what will be the consequences?

The first consequence will be that those statements of the Scriptures which make baptism a condition to the remission of sins and divine acceptance will antagonize our moral sense. That such tremendous issues should be made to depend on a condition so trivial, if not fanciful, and having no moral or rational connection therewith, is a proposition alike repugnant to our reason and to our clearest spiritual perceptions. Such a break between man's moral nature and the Scriptures must become a very serious matter for the Scriptures themselves, and there will remain but one way to deal with it. We must place forced interpretations on all such Scriptures, to remove their apparent disharmony with our moral instincts. If cleverly done, this procedure may satisfy some, but with many others it will seem that all is not right, and a lurking seed of skepticism will remain in the mind, to work its unconscious results.

Having dealt with this difficulty, we shall then find ourselves confronted by another. If baptism is not a

condition of the remission of sins and of the divine acceptance, it is plain that we must remove it from among those conditions; and we must hold that the spiritual process of conversion, the divine acceptance, the remission of sins, and the entrance upon the Christian life, all take place without, and prior to, baptism. But, in doing so, we break with the *practice* of the apostles, as we have already seemed to do with their teaching. With them baptism, the internal and external together, followed repentance immediately, the immersion not being separated from the spiritual act of submission to God. On the day of Pentecost it took place, in its entirety, with three thousand persons. At the house of Cornelius it took place immediately; with the Ethiopian eunuch, immediately; with the Philippian jailer, the same hour of the night, etc. Such was the apostolic practice. To what, now, can be attributed the fact that the method to-day extensively practiced is to bring the penitent directly to the point where he shall feel that his sins have been remitted, and to disallow baptism till it is believed that all the steps of conversion, as well as the divine acceptance and the complete entrance upon the Christian life, have taken place—to what can this be attributed, but to the belief that baptism has no rightful place in the process of conversion, and to what can that be attributed, but to the assumption that it is a mere outward act?

This deviation from the apostolic practice is similar to that which would take place with marriage, should the parties take each other privately as man and wife, entering fully upon the marital relation, and after they had been living together for several months, call in a minister to perform some kind of ceremony over them,

to indicate that they had been married some months before. Should such a mutilation of marriage take place, how long would it take to bring the *ceremony* into neglect? And should this empty ceremony be given the name of marriage, how quickly would marriage be pronounced a non-essential, and how often neglected altogether. Why does marriage, the internal the (mental) and the external, hold its ground from age to age? and why are the internal and external *never* separated? There can be but one answer—the immutable laws of nature, which lock them securely in their places—so securely that none but the immoral ever think of calling the external part of marriage a non-essential. Thus to mutilate marriage, separating the external from the internal, would so far destroy its utility as practically to amount to *free-love*. Let us beware how we mutilate baptism, separating the internal from the external; for it cannot fail to work serious damage to the high spiritual interests of Christianity itself.

Having taken baptism out of the proper place assigned it in the Scripture teaching and apostolic practice, we are confronted by another question. Where shall we put it? As a matter of fact, it has been put in various places. It is applied to infants as a dedicatory ceremony. If it be a mere external act, the fact that infants can furnish no mental factor would form no objection to its use upon them; and, if we are to mutilate it, separating the external from the internal, the question, what place we shall assign to the external part, is thenceforth a simple question of expediency or taste. But, in doing so, we are breaking with the Scriptures, and with the analogy of all the externalized

mental acts of history. We are at sea, and have little else but fancy to guide us.

Those who insist on believers' baptism and aim to keep as close to the Scriptures as possible, but deny that baptism has any rightful place in conversion, can probably do nothing better than limit its use to being "a door into the visible church." But the Scriptures know nothing of any such limitation, and even make it impossible, if their statements regarding its being a condition of salvation, or remission of sins, are to receive their natural interpretation. Baptism is not a *door* into anything; it is an *entering* into Christ—the welding of that mystic bond between the soul and Christ, which is described as its being in him, and he in it. This limitation therefore dispenses with the central and most important use of baptism, retaining only a derivative one; but it is no doubt the best that can be done under the circumstances.

If we are to cut loose from the distinct statements of Scripture, and from the unmistakable practice of the apostles in the use of baptism, we shall find ourselves confronted with another question.

If baptism be a mere external act, a mere formality, why retain it at all in a spiritual religion like Christianity? This situation is by no means a fanciful one. It is being felt with not a little force, and some of the evangelical denominations are holding to the ordinance with a very feeble grasp. To regard baptism as a mere outward act, and then place it in useless and unseemly positions, is to put it on trial for its life. Nay, rather, to kill it, and then seek to withhold it from burial.

Such is the havoc wrought by reading into the Scriptures a distinction that they do not recognize. To speak of baptism as the "outward form of an in-

ward grace"; or as "a sign and seal of the soul's giving up to God," is to chop the meaning of a Scripture term squarely in two, and apply the whole term to its external half, thus making the Scriptures say what they never intended, and involving them in numerous contradictions and inconsistencies.

Baptism was regarded in the apostolic church as *one act, internal and external*, and it continued to be so regarded for more than three hundred years. St. Augustine was the first to introduce the distinction which forms the basis of the modern view.*

Regard baptism as a *spiritual-physical* act, and all difficulties immediately vanish. If it be the great consummating spiritual step in conversion, as the Scriptures represent it, our moral nature at once arises and places it where they place it, as a condition of salvation; and its external part becomes just as useful (nay, more so) as that of marriage, and numerous other externalized mental acts, both civil and social, which hold their places from age to age among all nations, grounded in the necessities of natural law. When so regarded, reason, conscience, the human heart, and all history arise to do it homage, and, with reverent hands, enthrone it where Christ and the apostles placed it. The institution of baptism rests on a basis of eternal spiritual laws; and it will endure as long as conversion itself shall last, and the human soul shall continue to be what it is. It courts the light, and will justify itself in the highest courts of human reason. The question is not whether much or little of it shall be retained, or whether much or little shall be made of it. *Restoration* is the duty of the hour.

*See *Encyc. Brit.*, Art. *Baptism*.

Restore baptism in its meaning, in its place, in its use; and, when it shall appear the exalted thing that it is, it will need no apologist. When the bush shall burn, men will take off their shoes in its presence.

CHAPTER V.

THE DIVINE SIDE OF BAPTISM.

§1. *God's Part in Baptism.*

In the last three chapters the spiritual element in baptism has been considered only in so far as it relates to the candidate's share in the act. It now remains to consider God's part in baptism.

One of the first things to arrest our attention in the examination of the subject of baptism is the fact that the candidate does not baptize himself. With the young and timid, there would seem to be a natural reason for this, but in a large proportion of cases, there can be no such explanation. Yet we find in the Scriptures that self-baptism never in any case took place, and furthermore, that it was required in the Commission itself that the disciples should do the baptizing. What is the meaning of this? Clearly, that the physical part of baptism is performed *by God*, through an agent. It is *God's act*. So completely is this so, that the agent is allowed no discretionary power, but is commanded to perform a certain specific act on a certain particular kind of candidate: and, that he may know that the candidate is a proper subject, a confession of faith is provided, embodying the ground of his fitness. And, then, the administrator is required to perform the act not in his own, but in God's, name. The administrator therefore becomes an instrument—God's physical hand in baptizing men. His act is an administrative act of the Divine Government. Baptism is thus a *dual* act—a single act by two persons, God and the candidate—God performing, the

candidate receiving. It belongs to that class of acts which can only take place through the agency of *two* persons, like shaking hands, marriage, etc.

There arises here an important question. As God's part of the act is performed by an agent clothed with power of attorney, we may ask, Is God present in the act, *in propria persona*, or only by proxy? A man may transact business in America by his attorney, while living in Constantinople, and be absent not only in body but in thought from what is taking place at the time. In this case, although the act of the agent is strictly *his* by authorization, it is nevertheless purely *legal*, and devoid of a personal element. If, therefore, God baptizes only by an agent, without being personally present in the act, vast consequences must ensue. Baptism, on his part, must become a mere legal affair, and this, by an infallible law of influence, will freeze it into legalism on its human side; and a legal baptism will be but the introduction to a legal religious life.

This important question is answered for us in advance by the parable of the Prodigal Son. The father does not simply leave orders with his servants that, in case the prodigal returns, they shall admit him, and then go about his business, giving it no further thought; but watches anxiously for his coming and, seeing him afar off, runs to meet him, and falls upon his neck, and stifles his confessions with kisses. This, then, we conclude, will be the welcome which the divine Father will give to returning prodigals who come to him in baptism.

There is another scene that throws much light on this subject. Although Christ was baptized by John, his baptism differed in important respects from John's

baptism; and in all these respects corresponded with Christian baptism, and with the advantage, that some of its attendant features are pictorially represented. It is an exact type of Christian baptism in all respects, save that the matter of sin does not enter into consideration.

Let us notice what takes place here. First, we have the external act, which we can see; but we have also, on the part of Jesus, a putting off of the old, and laying hold on a new, life-work—a putting off of the life of a carpenter and taking up that marvelous mission of saving mankind. On the part of God, we have the performance of the physical baptism through John his appointed agent, and, in it, his approving acceptance of Jesus in his new consecration; for he openly declares such acceptance immediately after. Then, at the close of the act of baptism, the Spirit, in the form of a dove, appears and rests upon Jesus, and a voice out of heaven declares him to be God's well beloved son.

We here have no mere baptism by proxy, but the same fatherly meeting and loving greeting as took place in the case of the prodigal; and we have, moreover, a certain series of occurrences which correspond in all respects to those of Christian baptism, save that, in the latter, the last two are not clothed in symbol. As in this, so in Christian baptism, we have the external act, and the *same* act. We have also in the soul of the candidate a renouncing of the old life and taking on of a new life of divine service—a consecration, a giving of himself to God. But, because he is a sinner, we have also one other thing—a prayer for divine acceptance and pardon (1. Pet. iii. 21).* On

*See interpretation of this passage in Chapter III., p. 53.

the part of God, we have the performance of the physical act, through an agent, and—what? This is the whole question that divides the Christian world regarding the design of baptism, to-day. Let us therefore proceed carefully here. There is one thing certain—God is *present personally;* for baptism is said to be the "asking for a good conscience toward him" (or, as some prefer to read, "the inquiry* of a good conscience after God"); and, if God be not present to hear this appeal of the heart, he does but mock it. The same thing is referred to in Acts xxii. 16, when Ananias directs Saul to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins, "calling on his [Christ's] name."† This calling on the name of Christ, this prayer of the soul to him, is an act which presupposes the listening ear and the answering blessing. Unless God has intended to mock us, he has not placed these spiritual acts in baptism, to receive no response from him. The cry of the heart is not uttered into vacancy. As with the prodigal, the surrender of the soul finds ready the Everlasting Arms. God is present at the baptismal scene of the convert, as he was at that of his own son, and ready to add his blessing.‡ What is that blessing? The promise is that immediately‖ after baptism the

*Vulgate, De Wette, Alford. Lange's *Com.* has: "Baptism is the inquiry for a good conscience before God." So, substantially, Thayer's *Lexicon.*

†The verb is in the middle voice—"I call upon (in my behalf) the name of the Lord . . . i. e., Christ" (Thayer's *Lexicon*). This is decisive, showing that God is present in the act of baptism, ready to bestow some benefit.

‡Of course, there is a sense in which God is everywhere present. His gracious presence is here referred to.

‖Immediately, in the sense that the Holy Spirit was promised without any further condition on the part of the candidate. The Holy Spirit was sometimes conferred by laying on of hands by the apostles, but there is no reason to believe that this was either necessary or universal. Nor have we any knowledge that this

Holy Spirit shall be given to the convert, bearing witness of sonship in his heart and causing him to cry "Abba, Father."

Of so much we are certain, then—that God is present at the transaction, and that the Holy Spirit is bestowed after it. Does anything else take place? At this point there are two passages which demand our attention—1. Pet. iii. 21, which declares that baptism saves us, and Acts xxii. 16, which speaks of baptism as washing away sin, thus implying that there is something in baptism which takes away sin. These two passages, according to the popular ideas of baptism, stand clearly opposed to our moral intuitions, and to the spirit of Christianity itself. Let us not, however, yield to the temptation to place upon them some strained interpretation; for in so doing we shall close the door to all further light. Let us allow them their obvious import, and continue our investigations. And first, let us look into baptism itself to see what we can find there. There is the external act. Can we discover anything in this which has the power to take away sin? No, for if this were so every bather would be made free from guilt. In some ages of the church, saving power has been supposed to reside in water, but if there be any one who, after reading the Gospels and the epistles of Paul, setting forth the spiritual character of Christianity, can suppose the apostles capable of such a view, for him I do not write.

Now, let us ascend to the spiritual part of baptism,

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was delayed, except in a single instance (Acts viii.) when the apostles were absent, and when it seemed best that the Spirit should be conferred through their instrumentality. The entire language of Scripture and the apostolic history lead us to believe that the gift of the Holy Spirit was closely connected with baptism.

within the soul—the putting off of the old life and the complete giving of one's self up to God. Is there anything in this that has power to take away sin? There can be no doubt that it forms a fitting *condition* of remission, but it has *within itself* no power to take away guilt, else the candidate could pardon his own sins—an idea which is inconsistent with the very nature of pardon. If we proceed a step further, we shall see that pardon is of necessity something that takes place on the part of another, and, in this case, it must be the act of God.

If pardon, or remission of sins, must of necessity be a divine act; if, under the figure of a washing, baptism is said to take away sin; and if it saves us (1. Pet. iii. 21), it is clear that baptism must contain within itself a divine act—the remission of sins. When any one is washed, he is not cleansed *after* the act, but *in* and *by* it; and when one is saved by anything, the saving takes place *in* the act which saves him, not *after* it.* It is equally true that when a man is washed he is not cleansed *before* the washing, but in and by it; and that when a man is saved by anything he is not saved *before* that thing takes place, but *when* it takes place† Here, then, is a divine spiritual element in baptism—the pardon, or remission, of sins.

Again, we have seen that the Holy Spirit was promised after baptism, as an indwelling guest, bearing witness of divine sonship. But this could not take

*In Titus iii.5 we are said to be saved "THROUGH the washing of regeneration [baptism] and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." Thus, salvation takes place, at least in part, in baptism. The Scriptures do not regard baptism simply as a condition to be complied with, *after* which salvation is granted, but as God's act, in and through which he saves us.

†That remission of sins does not take place before baptism, will be considered at greater length in a subsequent part of this work.

place unless *acceptance* to sonship had already taken place. And with this the Scriptures agree; for Paul says (Gal. iv. 6): "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Now, does this acceptance to sonship take place *in* baptism, or *after* it? If the acceptance does not take place until after the act, baptism falls out of analogy with all other externalized mental acts. When the little child throws its arms around its mother's neck and kisses her, is the act a mere empty formality, and does the caress in its little heart not take place until it is all over? Is it not the truth of the case that the heart-caress has burst into form, and lives in the form, as the spirit lives in the body? When the father fell upon the prodigal's neck and passionately kissed him, are we to understand that this was all empty acting, and that the true heart-greeting did not come until it was all over? Nothing but the most positive statements of Scripture could justify us in believing that Christian baptism so grossly violates the spiritual laws of the heart. And here let it be said that but give the heart a chance, and it will correct nearly every error in regard to baptism in the Christian world to-day.

But what have the Scriptures to say on this subject? As already seen, the Holy Spirit is not given until after the acceptance to sonship. Now, where does this acceptance to sonship take place? or at what point do men become sons of God? Paul says (Gal. iii. 26, 27): "For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." Here the believer's becoming a son is located *in baptism*, and it is stated that it comes about by his putting on Christ, i. e., the spir-

itual part of baptism on its human side. But, a few verses further on, it is said that this becoming sons, which takes place in baptism, comes about by *adoption;* which simply views the same fact from its Godward side, i. e., the spiritual part of baptism on its divine side. Of course, such acceptance to sonship implies pardon, or remission of sins. Baptism, therefore, on its divine side, embraces both pardon and adoption.

Baptism on its human side is a putting off of the old life and taking on the new—a complete giving up to God, and finds fitting expression in *burial* and *resurrection;* baptism on its divine side is an acceptance to sonship, involving remission of sins, and finds fitting expression in the *washing of water.* The *burial*, on the human side, finds its correlate in the *washing*, on the divine side; the *consecration and prayer for acceptance and pardon*, on the human side, finds its correlate in *acceptance* (involving pardon), on the divine side. This all takes place *in the act*, as it did in the meeting of the prodigal and his father,* and as the spiritual

*Care must be taken not to find in this parable a complete picture of Christian conversion. Christ's mediatorial work had not yet been done, and his kingdom was not yet set up. The prodigal comes to his father without any knowledge of a mediator, and his confession is not, as is that of Christian conversion, a confession of *faith.* The eager embrace and kiss and the bestowment of the best robe, the ring, and the shoes, with the merry-making, together constitute the father's loving welcome and reinstatement of the offender, and correspond to blessings conferred in, or in close connection with, baptism. To make the embrace and kiss represent a transaction taking place before baptism would not be allowable, for no such thing happens in Christian conversion. This was a spiritual greeting embodied in a *visible act of expression*, and conveying to the prodigal the assurance of his father's forgiveness. Nothing of the kind takes place before baptism in conversion. There is no divine-human meeting in which the assurance of remission of sins is conveyed. On the contrary, the Spirit of adoption, giving the sense of sonship, is, by divine appointment, not bestowed until after baptism.

laws of the heart demand that it should do; and these same laws demand that the spiritual meeting of the penitent and his Savior shall find embodiment in an external act. Step between the father and the prodigal and prevent their passionate embrace and eager kiss, and behold the heart-hunger on either side. Nay, it would strike deeper than that; a constrained and starved greeting would have largely chilled the feeling, the very spiritual part of the greeting, itself; and still further than this, had neither of them *desired* any act of greeting, it would have proved the coldness of the son's repentance and the coldness of the father's acceptance, and would have given evidence of a spirit of mere legalism on both sides. True baptism, so far from being a mere legal affair, is the enemy of legalism, and, by its very nature, a conservator of spirituality in conversion. By virtue of its high spiritual elements it must ever be a stumbling-block to the legalist.

But there are other Scriptural evidences that baptism embraces within itself divine acceptance, one of which I will mention. No one can be "baptized into Christ" without both *seeking to enter*, and *being admitted*, into Christ. Being "in Christ" is a *social relation*, and can as little be accomplished by one party alone as can marriage. This very phrase shows that baptism was regarded by the apostles as an act of divine acceptance on the part of Christ. If any one doubts this, let him try to define the meaning of being "in Christ," so as to exclude acceptance on the part of Christ, and he will discover the moral impossibility involved. "Baptized into Christ" is probably the most comprehensive expression in the New Testament regarding baptism. It embraces, on its physical side, a

burial and resurrection, answering to the spiritual element on the human side; and (since it takes place in water) a *washing*, answering to the cleansing from guilt, on the divine side. Then, in its spiritual aspect, we have an *entering into Christ* (human part), and an *admission into Christ* (divine part).

Baptism is therefore a *dual* act, which, like *handshaking* and many other similar acts, has *two souls, and one body with two aspects*. "Baptized into Christ" is one of those happy expressions that say a thing once and forever.

It may, perhaps, be said that baptism means all this, but only as a symbol, and that it points to a union between the convert and Christ taking place some time before. Take this view, and you cause baptism to break with the analogy of all other similar institutions. Do lovers take each other as husband and wife and enter upon the full marital relation some time before the marriage act? Can any sufficient reason be assigned why baptism should be so treated? Take this view and you sow the New Testament full of inconsistencies, and unmoral conditions, and cause it to break with our clearest moral instincts, and with its own sublime teachings, and then, having read unmoral meanings into it, you must wrest and distort its language, to make it morally tolerable—and all this for the sake of adhering to a groundless assumption that baptism is a mere outward act. It is amazing how men could have so erred regarding baptism. It is the work of mechanical theologies blind to the true nature of Christianity as a religion of the heart.

If baptism contains within itself a double spiritual element,—a human giving and a divine receiving,—there will no longer be any passages of Scripture to

explain away, for it is plain that it contains *within itself* something capable of taking away the guilt of sin. This power lies not in the water, not in the burial, not in the soul's giving up to Christ, but in the *divine acceptance*, which forms the spiritual part of baptism on its divine side. If this is true, baptism must of course be "for the remission of sins," and can be fitly said to "wash away" sins, and it will be but natural to say that we are "saved by the washing of regeneration," etc. All those passages which have been wont to scandalize our moral sense when baptism is viewed as a mere physical act, now fall readily into line, and even become to the heart some of the most precious in the Bible. The whole language of the New Testament regarding baptism thus becomes natural, and in perfect keeping with the spirit of Christianity. Baptism remains no longer vulnerable to the attacks of the rationalist, but turns upon him and, armed with a higher rationalism, sweeps into his camp with telling effect. It ceases to need an apologist, and becomes itself one of the moral evidences of Christianity.

Baptism is a clasping of hands with God. The hand of the penitent trembles and is wet with tears: the hand of the Father is strong, kind, assuring. The hand-clasp is in silence; then, through the Spirit,—"My son"—"Abba, Father."

Baptism is the meeting of the Father and the returning prodigal. The conditions in conversion and in the parable are the same, save that, as God has no human body, the physical act must of necessity be different. In the mutual embrace the son commits himself to a filial life, with contrite pleadings for acceptance, and in it also, he is accepted. All this is so in baptism. To have deferred the passionate embrace and placed

the scene some months after the son had returned home would have been to transform it into a mockery. Why not so with baptism? Deny the embrace and eager kiss, and you have heart-hunger and a chilling of the feelings that seek such expression. Let the embrace not be *desired* by the parties, and you have the coldness of legalism.

Accord to baptism, on its human side, the spiritual elements which the Scriptures give to it, and there is no other fitting place where pardon and acceptance to divine sonship *can* take place. When theology restores to baptism the spiritual element of putting on Christ (Gal. iii. 27), the divine pardon and acceptance will quickly take its place there also.

§2. *The Larger View.*

The description of the divine side of baptism can hardly be complete without mentioning a larger view, for which the Scriptures seem to give some warrant.

We have thus far considered the gift of the Holy Spirit as taking place *after* baptism. Is such the case? The representative statement of Peter on the day of Pentecost declares that they who repent and are baptized "shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." This language declares that the Holy Spirit shall be received on condition of repentance and baptism, but does not specify whether the bestowment is to take place in the act of baptism or after it.

There seems to be no reason why the gift of the Holy Spirit should be delayed; the same conditions which entitle one to the remission of sins also entitle him to the gift of the Spirit; so that there need be no waiting for further preparation on the part of the candidate. If remission of sins and adoption to sonship take place in baptism, certainly the person who has re-

ceived these marks of acceptance is prepared to receive the Holy Spirit. There can be no moral or spiritual reason why one who has been adopted to sonship should not at once receive the "spirit of adoption."

But do not the facts of the gospel history decide that the Holy Spirit is bestowed after baptism, rather than in it? They do not. In so far as they describe the Holy Spirit as being bestowed through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, they necessarily must describe it as following baptism, for this imposition of hands would not be practicable during the baptismal act. But we have no reason to think that this was the universal practice. There was no apostle present to lay hands on the Ethiopian eunuch after his baptism (Acts viii.); and he was on his way to a distant country, where no such opportunity would be afforded later. The Christians at Rome possessed the Holy Spirit, as we learn by Paul's letter to them, but we have no reason to believe that they had, at that time, ever been visited by an apostle. Instances need not be multiplied. The gift of the Holy Spirit was promised to the penitent on his submission to baptism, not on submission to baptism *and* the laying on of hands; and, in all those cases where the laying on of hands did not take place, the physical cause of delay involved in that act would not be present. If there was in such cases any delay, we have no evidence of the fact.

The baptism of Christ was a close type of Christian baptism; and we learn that, as he was "coming up out of the water," and while praying (*cf.* Mk. i. 10 and Lk. iii. 21), the Holy Spirit came upon him in the form of a dove. Here, too, the fact that the Spirit assumed a bodily form would render its resting upon him impracticable during the baptismal act; but there

is one thing worthy of note: the bestowment of the Spirit was in immediate connection with the baptism, and formed part of the baptismal transaction. That the Spirit was not given *during* the act of immersion is a matter of no importance; it *belonged* to the baptism. It belonged to God's part of the transaction. And there is every reason to believe that the gift of the Holy Spirit belongs to Christian baptism, and forms a part of the divine share in that transaction. Unless we are prepared to say that God arbitrarily withholds his Spirit from those whom he has already pardoned and adopted as his children, we must hold that the bestowment of the Holy Spirit takes place in immediate connection with baptism, and is essentially a part of the divine side of baptism.

In connection with this, it will be well to notice a few facts:

John the Baptist predicted that the baptism of the Messiah, not like his own, which was simply a baptism "in water," should be a baptism "in the Holy Spirit"; and a great outflow of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Messiah's kingdom had, for centuries, been a matter of prophetic prediction. There are some who regard the fulfillment of these prophecies as being fully accomplished in the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, together with a similar bestowment on Cornelius and his friends (*cf.* Acts ii. and x.); but it seems to me that there is not sufficient evidence for this view. It will hardly be questioned that the Christian dispensation is, in its entirety, not only a "ministration of the spirit" (2 Cor. iii), but a ministration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is promised to every convert (Acts ii. 38), and without his indwelling no one can be regarded as a Christian

(Rom. viii. 9). Beyond this far-reaching fact, there are some Scripture statements which are worthy of consideration.

Christ directed the disciples that, after his ascension, they should remain at Jerusalem until John's prediction should be fulfilled, telling them that they should "be baptized in the Holy Spirit" not many days after. They did as he directed, and on the day of Pentecost the miraculous bestowment of the Spirit took place. This, Peter explained as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, declaring that there should be a great *pouring out* of the spirit in the Messiah's reign. As this event is taken as a fulfillment not only of John's and Christ's prediction regarding a *baptism* of the Holy Spirit, but also of Joel's prediction regarding the *outpouring* of the Holy Spirit, it is evident that the two expressions are but different designations of the same act. Whenever, therefore, we find the *pouring out* of the Spirit spoken of, we may understand that the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit is meant, and *vice versa*. Now, in Titus iii. 5, 6, we have the statement, referring to Christians generally, that "he [God] saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he POURED OUT upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Savior." The outpouring (or baptism) of the Holy Spirit was, therefore, not limited to one or two occasions, but was a bestowment belonging to Christian converts generally; and we may consider it to be the same as the "gift of the Holy Spirit" spoken of by Peter in Acts ii. 38.

But the question runs deeper than this; for the *renewing* of the Holy Spirit is, in Titus iii. 5, 6, connected directly with the *outpouring* of the Holy Spirit. But this renewing of the Spirit is, in the same passage,

declared to be one of the steps in reaching salvation. The salvation of the Cretans was accomplished only "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." The baptism, or outpouring of the Holy Spirit, is, therefore, one of the conditions of salvation. If it be true that "he who believeth and is baptized shall be saved," it can only be so as the baptism of the Holy Spirit forms part of the transaction.

This language in Titus completely parallels another statement by Christ himself; in Jn. iii. 5, Christ said to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It hardly need be said that commentators generally regard both the "washing of regeneration," in Titus, and "born of water," in John, as referring to baptism.* In view of this, the parallel will stand thus: "washing of regeneration" (Titus); "born of water" (John); the "renewing of the Holy Spirit," connected with its outpouring (Titus); "born of the Spirit," or the gift, outpouring, or baptism of the Holy Spirit (John); salvation (Titus); entrance into the kingdom of God (John). It will be observed also that we have the

*Thayer's *New Testament Greek Lexicon* and Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Greek Lexicon* both define *loutrou* in Titus iii. 5 as referring to baptism.

Prof. Geo. B. Stevens, Ph. D., D. D., Professor of New Testament Criticism and Interpretation in Yale University, says of the language in Jn. iii. 5: "Most commentators, ancient and modern, hold that there is in the word 'water' some kind of a reference to baptism." De Wette, Meyer and Holtzmann, he says, refer it to Christian baptism; while Tholuck, Alford, Westcott, Plummer and Godet take it as referring primarily to John's baptism, and having an 'indirect or prophetic reference to Christian baptism.' "—*The Johannine Theology*, p. 249.

For our present purpose it does not matter which of these views is taken. It is sufficient to know that "born of water" refers to baptism.

same order of statement in both passages, namely, the "washing of regeneration" and "born of water," first; the "renewing of the Holy Spirit" (connected with its outpouring) and "born of the Spirit," second. The order is also the same as in Peter's statement in Acts ii. 38, where baptism stands first and the gift of the Holy Spirit, second.

If in Jn. iii. 5 "born of water" means baptism, the word *born* may be read *baptized*, and we shall have the passage reading: "Except a man be baptized in water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. As men are saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing (outpouring) of the Holy Spirit, so they must be baptized not only in water, but in the Holy Spirit, in order to enter into the kingdom. Let it be noticed, also, that we do not have two births here,—one of water and the other of the Spirit,—but *one* birth, in which both are factors. If, therefore, this language refers to baptism in water and the Holy Spirit, we shall have, not *two* baptisms,—one of water and another of the Spirit,—but one baptism, of which both form a part.

This passage has been wont to give much trouble to those who understand "born of water" to refer to the modern evacuated baptism. If *Scriptural* baptism be understood, there can be no difficulty; for "born of water" will then include surrender to God, laying hold on his salvation, and the forsaking of the old life and entering upon a new, together with remission of sins and divine acceptance on God's part. Then, in immediate connection with this, and forming a part of the one birth, is the bestowment of the Holy Spirit. Baptism—the jewel with its

casket, the spiritual element with its physical investiture—is certainly worthy of this position.

There is another passage which speaks, not of the *outpouring*, but of the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit, as applied to Christians generally. Paul says to the Corinthians: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (1. Cor. xii. 13). Here we have baptism in the Spirit bringing its subjects into "one body."* Let it be noted that the one body here spoken of refers to Christ, or the body of Christ (see preceding verse). Now, we learn elsewhere that it is the very purpose of baptism to introduce men into Christ—into a spiritual union with him and his earthly body, the church. We now discover that this is not consummated short of baptism in the Spirit. This is supported by all we know of such a relation with Christ. Our union with Christ consists not simply in *our* being in him, but also in *his* being in us (Jn. xv. 3-6; Gal. ii. 20; Rom. viii. 9, 10, *et al*); and such union cannot certainly reach its full consummation until he dwells in us by his Spirit.

We are "saved" by the "washing of regeneration" and outpouring (baptism) of the Holy Spirit; we are "born again" by a baptism in water and the Holy Spirit; and we are brought into the body of Christ by being baptized in water and the Holy Spirit. We are not saved, born again, nor introduced into the body of Christ, until we receive the Holy Spirit; and, if we lose it, we are no longer saved, but lost (Rom. viii. 9). The time when men are saved is not between baptism

*The writer is not unmindful of some recent criticism favoring a different view; but it is believed that a correct view of the context supports the rendering of the Revised Version, "in one spirit," the baptism being a baptism *in* the Spirit.

and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but at the point when they receive the Holy Spirit. To recognize this fact will be no small gain in spirituality of conception. It makes all hinge where it should, and where it does throughout the Christian life, namely, on the possession of the "Spirit of Christ."

Whether the gift of the Holy Spirit be understood as taking place strictly in the physical act of baptism,* or after it, it seems evident that the two are regarded as but parts of one transaction, and that the offices assigned to baptism are not fulfilled apart from the bestowment of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit belongs to the divine side of baptism.

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*Alexander Campbell taught that the Holy Spirit is bestowed *in* baptism. See *Christian Baptist*, pp. 417, 436.

Division II.

THE VALUE OF BAPTISM AS A STUMBLING-BLOCK.

CHAPTER I.

§1. *Nature and Uses of the "Stumbling-Block."*

One of the divine characteristics of Christianity is to be found in its stumbling-blocks; and it is in these that, in large measure, resides its tremendous power over the human heart. This feature of Christianity had been foreseen in prophetic vision, and the coming of Christ had been predicted as the laying in Sion of "a stumbling-stone and rock of offence." When Christ was brought an infant to the temple, the aged Simeon said of him that he was "set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which should be spoken against"; while the preaching of the gospel is declared by Paul to have proved a stumbling-block to the Jews.

Christ became a stumbling-block by what he taught, by what he did, and most of all by what he demanded of men; and that he himself is so often called a stumbling-block, does but show how continually he placed before men things which caused them to stumble. John had declared of him that he should have a winnowing fan in his hand, and that he should thoroughly purge his floor; and it is true that his ministry was a perpetual winnowing of men, driving men away—causing them to stumble—and drawing them to him. At one time he caused all his disciples

except the twelve to desert him. They went away, but not forever. We hear from them again on the day of Pentecost.

On one occasion a young man came running to him, and asked him what good thing he must do to inherit eternal life. Christ referred him to the commandments, naming some of them, and the young man declared that he had kept them all from his youth up, and asked what yet was lacking. With his unerring insight into the secrets of the human heart, Christ answered, "Go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, . . . and come, follow me." Like a thunderbolt riving the oak, so fell this sentence upon the young ruler. Amazed, confounded, dumb, he stood. He stumbled—and went away sorrowing, for he was very rich. But this was not all. A few moments before, he had been resting in the assurance that he was keeping the commandments, but like a gleam of lightning, this sentence had flashed into his soul, and revealed, not God enthroned there, but Mammon. The most fundamental of all the commandments he was breaking continually. He was not loving God, as the law commanded, with his "heart, his soul, and his might" and he was *not* loving his neighbor as himself, for he was surfeiting in wealth, with abject want at his very door. This was strong treatment, but there is nothing more characteristic of Christ's ministry than his appalling faithfulness with men; and they have studied the human heart to little purpose who do not see that if this fails to convert the young man, nothing else will be likely to do so.

This is the great service of the stumbling-block. It is a *revelation*. From the address of Simeon to Mary (Lk. ii. 34-36), we learn four things about it: (1)

It causes men to stumble, to "fall"; (2) it will be "spoken against"; (3) by it the deeper "thoughts" of men's hearts are "revealed" to *them* and to others; and (4) their "fall" is with a view to their "rising again." The R. V. reads "rising up" instead of "rising again," indicating that those who fall and those who rise are not the same person, and it was, alas! too true that many of those who fell never rose again, but it is also true that the stumbling-blocks of Christ were charged with tremendous converting power. Either translation does full justice to the original.

In Milton's epic Satan sits in the guise of an innocent toad at the ear of the sleeping Eve, till touched by the spear of Ithuriel, when he starts forth in all his grizzly deformity. The stumbling-block is an Ithuriel's spear, dissolving the masks of character and revealing men to themselves; and in this revelation lies one of the tremendous motive powers to their conversion. The work of the stumbling-block is necessary to the success of the converting forces; nay, it is itself one of the most powerful of these forces. As the wounded hart flees from the huntsman, bearing in its body the fatal arrow, and hides away to die alone, so many a soul fled from Christ, carrying the arrow of conviction, but to writhe alone in the agony of its death to sin. No such masterful work was ever done before on our earth as this; no such mighty hand ever swept the chords of the human heart.

The reason of the stumbling-block and the necessity for it are found in a universal fact of human nature—that of blindness to the deeper motives of the heart. Water is transparent, and an object

lying just beneath its surface is easily visible, but the depths of the ocean sleep in everlasting darkness. Thus it is with the profounder motives of the heart; nothing but deep-sea soundings can bring forth their secrets. They did not err who inscribed in letters of gold above the door of a famous temple of old the words, KNOW THYSELF. It does but express the painful consciousness of the noblest of our race.

When we come to men with the gospel, we do not find them living in a perpetual battle with conscience, and in the glare of a condemning light. Men soon conquer their way to a congenial darkness, and are at rest in sin, so that "having eyes they see not, and having ears they hear not." There are some who sin with a high hand, and sear their conscience as with a hot iron, until its sensibility is lost. Others, with less of violence, administer to it potions, or coax it into silence, or hedge themselves against its attacks. Some hide away from the lightnings of God's displeasure by crawling into certain theories or systems of belief comforting to the evil doer, and are proof against the most powerful appeals to duty. But human blindness is not confined to those classes who stifle conviction. It is found also in those who are candid and sincere. There was never a more honest-hearted man than Simon Peter, and he was never more in earnest than when he solemnly declared that he would never deny his Master: but a few hours later he was denying him with an oath. Poor, honest Peter. There were depths in that heart of his which he had never sounded. The rich young man was so amiable that Christ loved him: but to him it was

to be revealed that his heart was a charnel-house of worldliness.

The work of conversion, therefore, involves a double revelation—a revelation of the truth from heaven, and a revelation of the heart of sin. In this latter revelation the stumbling-block is the most powerful instrument. Here is where philosophy must ever fail. It may teach truth, but it does not charge home upon men. It does not probe and reveal men to themselves, and it must ever be powerless to produce that marvelous revolution—conversion. Beware how you philosophize Christianity away, getting rid of its stumbling-blocks!

One form of the stumbling-block was, as we have seen, the *test-act*, such as was used in the case of the rich young man. This was not the only form made use of by Christ; but in cases where applicable, it is the most perfect of all. Its revelations are with unerring certainty. It is better than an angel visitant or a voice from heaven. It is *demonstration*. It forces the soul to self-revelation. It is the experimental method of modern science, whose questionings of nature have compelled her to give up her most cunning secrets. The test-act is the magic wand by which the man of science everywhere subdues nature and makes it obedient to the will of man; and this, Christ applied to the human heart more than eighteen centuries ago, compelling its profoundest secrets, bringing to light the darkest Africas of the human soul, opening the silent and shut chambers, and then sowing in the ghastly death-vaults of the human spirit the seeds of immortal life. This tremendous engine of power that has conquered nature was used with a master hand by the only One who has

ever conquered the human heart; and it worked no less royally there than in its application to nature.

We now face a momentous question: The mighty hand that swept the harp of life with such matchless power is no longer here. He who used the stumbling-block so much and with such telling effect in revealing men to themselves and quickening them to divine life, has gone from our midst. But the *need* remains; the human heart and its blindness continue as before. Shall Christ's gospel for the ages contain no stumbling-block, no test-act? If not, it will lack one of the mightiest agencies of his personal ministry in moving men to righteousness.

§2. *Baptism as a Stumbling-Block.*

Blindness regarding the state of the heart is a far-reaching fact in human nature, and is to be found, as we have seen, not alone in the low and vicious, but also in the candid and amiable. It is not confined to the ignorant, but held in its thrall in Christ's time the highest classes of the Jewish nation, even under the blaze of divine revelation, who being "blind leaders of the blind," and having "eyes to see" but seeing not, felt secure in a righteousness which, like the whited sepulchre, was filled with rottenness within. And yet these men were not mountebanks: they were "blind." Their hypocrisy was of that deeper kind which is unconscious.

Any system for the redemption of man which should ignore this great world-fact would be unworthy of the divine wisdom, and possess a fatal defect, which would render it powerless for the cure of sin. Of what use were light where men are blind? Of what use would have been revelations from heaven or the most powerful appeals to duty with the rich young

man, who felt that he was keeping the whole law blameless—his sightless eyes sealed against the light?

With all divine resources at his command, Christ during his personal ministry chose the test-act as the best and most effective means of dealing with such cases. What shall his gospel now do for them? Shall it leave such cases in their sleep of security till the trump of doom shall reveal to them their mistake, or shall it have its stumbling-block, its test-act?

To all those who think that their hearts are right, and that they are living righteously, the gospel says: Stand out there before men and in the presence of Heaven, and say, not with cheap words, but by a solemn act of consecration: "I forsake my old life forever. I burn all bridges behind me. I give myself to God and his service, though it cause the loss of every earthly good, and even life itself. Forever and forever, O God, I give myself wholly to thee. Accept me thine." Ah! here is a stumbling-block. No man who wishes to cling to the world with one hand and grasp heaven with the other is ready for this. To no man who is not in dead earnest is it welcome. Imposture aside, no worldly-minded man realizing the step can leap this barrier. No simply good, moral man likes this. To all but the profoundly penitent and loyal, it is a stumbling-block a high wall which they have not the spiritual power to scale. Like a breakwater, it is ever hurling back the floods of humanity who would sweep into the covenant of promise. With consummate statesmanship it is framed to turn back all but the truly penitent. You say, "If baptism involves all this, it is an awful thing." It is even so. It is awful because, like death, it is a going to meet one's God; but to the penitent, it is the bliss of the nuptial

hour. It is the rush of the prodigal into the father's arms. It is the supreme joy of a ransomed soul.

But baptism, as a stumbling-block, does more than cause the impenitent to stumble. True to its nature as a stumbling-block, by it "the thoughts of many hearts" are revealed (Lk. ii. 35). It is seen at once that it contains nothing that should be unwelcome to the truly loyal, and yet the hearts of all amiable worldlings, and of those whose repentance is defective, say, *no*. To all such it brings absolute demonstration, as Christ's test-act did to the rich young man, that within their hearts, not God, not righteousness, but the world, sits enthroned. It is a revelation to the amiable worldling, to the "moral man," to all the unspiritual, that their righteousness is superficial and has no true heart-foundation. It is an Ithuriel's spear, dissolving the masks of character, and revealing hearts in their true light. Baptism is a divine revelation to the individual soul. The New Testament reveals the truth from heaven; baptism reveals the heart. The New Testament meets human ignorance; baptism meets human blindness. Baptism cannot reveal what the New Testament reveals—the truth from heaven. The New Testament cannot, like baptism, unmask certain inveterate deceptions of the heart. The New Testament is sunlight; baptism is a searchlight. It is a revelation as holy, as divine, and well-nigh as necessary, as the New Testament.

Let any one recognizing the truth of Christianity, who hears *no* in his heart to baptism, take heed. It is a revelation of awful moment, and is as certain as though spoken by a voice out of heaven. It means that the heart is not right. Let such a one beware lest he

———"dash, with a blind and heavy crash,
Up against the thick-bossed shield of God's judgment in the field."

How gracious in God to submit this test of spirituality, before granting the assurance of divine acceptance! How merciful not to allow men to claim the promise of remission of sins on their own self-inspection! How fatuous would it be in the church to remove this test, and compel the soul to take this most momentous step of its existence in the dark!

But baptism is more than a revelation. It is not only true that by it the thoughts of many hearts are revealed, but it is also "set for the fall and rising again of many." This revelation of unsuspected unworthiness puts conflict within the soul, wakes the thunders of conscience, and brings to battle the hostile forces of righteousness and evil. Alas! this battle is with various issue, and many fall never to rise again; but this is better than the peace of spiritual death, for with multitudes the issue is unto eternal life. Baptism is therefore one of the strong converting forces of the gospel.

Baptism is more than this. It is a winnowing-fan, separating the chaff from the wheat. It is ever turning back the flood-tides of the unspiritual seeking entrance among the redeemed. It is a wall skillfully built to keep out those who are not penitent and loyal, and by this service it becomes a protector of the spirituality of the church. Take it away, and the world and the church would flow together, and the church would be lost in the sea of unredeemed humanity. He who strikes baptism strikes not only the great heart of the world, smiting down one of its mighty redeeming forces, but deals a blow at the spirituality of the church. Baptism is God's tall sentinel angel,

guarding the door of his kingdom, and protecting the high spiritual sanctities of our holy religion.

Strike baptism down, and we all fall down, Christianity fades into a philosophy or, what is little different, a mere body of revealed truth, conversions to any extent cease, and that marvelous organization of spiritual forces for the redemption of man, embodied in the church of Christ, perishes from the earth.*

Let us now pause and look around us. Is baptism doing all this glorious work to-day? Our sad answer must be, No—at least, only in part. But why not? This question must be reserved for another chapter.

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*Even though the spiritual part of baptism—the complete giving up to God—should remain, yet, if this be not provided with an outward expression, there can be no visible line of separation between the church and the world, and the church must lose its identity, and the great purpose of its existence must fail. It may be supposed that *confession* might answer the purpose of a dividing line, even though baptism were discarded, but this could only be by changing the confession (Mt. xvi. 16) both in substance and function, and putting as much of the character of baptism into it as possible, and even then Christianity would suffer a great loss, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

CHEAPENING BAPTISM.

It was seen in the last chapter that baptism is admirably adapted as a stumbling-block to all those who are unspiritual and lacking in loyalty to God; that it is a revealer of men's hearts; that this self-revelation furnishes a powerful motive to repentance; and that, by turning back the unspiritual, it becomes a winnowing-fan, safe-guarding the spirituality of the church.

But it is sadly true that these high ends are being but partially and imperfectly accomplished by it, and for the reason that it is not duly honored by the church.

The great motive for cheapening baptism must be found in the fact that, as it stands in the gospel, it is displeasing to many. It has had a stormy history, and is still bending under a shower of adverse criticism. To many, this may seem sufficient proof that there is something wrong about it; but they forget that it is of the very nature of a stumbling-block that it should be "spoken against," and that this is one of the highest marks of its excellency and efficiency. Men never like that which causes them to stumble, and if baptism were not disliked, it would be worthless as a test-act. But the disastrous thing about it is, that the church has largely joined in this adverse criticism, to the belittling and cheapening of baptism.

When an amiable worldling who thinks that he is living a worthy righteousness finds in his heart a *no* to baptism, if the church shall join with him, and tell

him that it is a "mere outward act," a mere physical affair having no important relation to his conversion, and that it is a "non-essential,"—that it has nothing to do with his salvation,—they *utterly ruin* it as a test-act. The man takes no alarm at his aversion to it, and concludes that it is not his heart that is wrong, but baptism. In doing this, the church has put out the search-light that the gospel was carrying into that man's heart; it has slain the angel that was coming to his rescue. Woe to those who put out lights in this dark world! Let such take care lest they be found fighting against God. The wreckers off the coast of California who, in an early day, were wont to quench the beacons on stormy nights, that ships might be wrecked, were monsters. But had they done their fatal work without designing it, the results would have been no less disastrous. What would the New Testament be worth, should the church decry it, belittle it, and discredit it before the world?

Put out the New Testament, the light from heaven, and the world would walk in darkness. Let it shine, but put out baptism, that search-light of the heart, and, heart-blind, many must still abide in darkness. Stand by baptism; declare with awful earnestness that it is a divine demand of vast importance; show that it is reasonable, and requires nothing that should not be welcome to the truly loyal, and that objection to it means nothing less than spiritual death; charge home upon men with a cry as to the perishing—and you shall wake thunders that shall startle them from their fatal security and quicken them to repentance. Honor baptism, use it aright, and you have in your hand a mighty power for the conversion of men.

But dissatisfaction with baptism will not stop at

adverse criticism. Men will lay violent hands upon it, and seek to get it out of the way, wholly or in part. It is asked, "Why not dispense with any external act, and let profession consist in a mere verbal announcement?" There is something wrong in the very wish to do this. I have endeavored to show, in a recent chapter, that the new-born love of a true penitent craves such an act of expression; and, if this be true, a desire to dispense with it would indicate that the heart is not right.

But what effect would cheapening baptism down to a mere verbal announcement have?

A witness stands in court ready to testify, but the court will not hear him till it has first thrown a stumbling-block in the way of bearing false witness. An officer says to him, "Raise your hand to heaven, and solemnly swear that you will tell the truth, and the truth only—and now solemnly pray, 'So help me, God!'" Instead of this, should the judge simply say, "I suppose you intend to tell the truth, sir," would it make no difference? Ask the courts of all civilized nations. Ask your own heart. No doubt oaths are often lightly taken, but the act of solemnly facing God and eternity at this point has a vast influence on truth-telling in our courts. It has great value as a stumbling-block; but the solemn emphasis of the civil oath utterly pales before the awful solemnity of Christian baptism. Save the subdued silence of the death chamber, and the passage of a soul into the great Unseen, there is nothing in our world so sublimely solemn. To reduce this sublime act to a mere verbal announcement would be to well-nigh level it to the ground as a stumbling-block—to destroy its usefulness as a test-act.

A friend of the writer once asked a sympathetic audience how many desired to live the Christian life. Nearly every one responded affirmatively. The same day, I believe, he gave the gospel invitation to attest that desire by a solemn act of profession before Heaven and earth, and *not one* responded, though the views of most of the audience accorded with those of the preacher. Here was the stumbling-block. Here was the difference between baptism and cheap words. Many of the half-hearted would be ready to declare a purpose to serve God, who would hesitate at an awful act of solemnity speaking the loud eloquence of a profound repentance. But baptism is designed to keep out the half-hearted. Such are not wanted. Beware how you meddle with God's stumbling-blocks!

Along the same line, but proceeding less far, is the practice of replacing the baptism of the gospel by certain faint substitutes, consisting in various other applications of water.

To its credit be it said that these substitutes did not have their origin in the Christianity of to-day; but it is to be lamented that many Christian people of our time should feel called upon to perpetuate these changes of a divine institution arising in a ruder and more unspiritual age. There is one thing about all these substitutes that may be thought to be in their favor—they are convenient. The baptism of the gospel causes some trouble. But this supposed defect is *valuable* to baptism as a stumbling-block. It is of vast importance to Christianity to keep out the ease-loving. Baptism ought *not* to be convenient. Christ's cross was not convenient, and our cross-bearing should not be. The science of biology teaches that ease-taking on the part of any creature results in degeneration—

dying down to a lower level of being. Ease-seeking in religion is nothing less than spiritual death, and all such tendencies should be resisted. Baptism, as a stumbling-block, should be built so high and strong as to repel all the unspiritual and ease-loving—every other being but the humble penitent fleeing with a broken heart to the arms of his Redeemer. Love is always heroic, and baptism, within and without, should be a wall so high that the unheroic who are unwilling to sacrifice will not leap it. The primitive church were a band of heroes, and they shook the world. Were we like them, the world would hear our thunders at its battlements. Beware how you cheapen baptism, making it more acceptable to the half-hearted!

While it is plain that as a test-act baptism should be repellant to the unrepentant, it is also true that there should be nothing in it to repel the truly penitent. Christian baptism not only fulfills this condition, but goes beyond it, presenting a strong attraction to the convert by satisfying one of his deepest cravings. And in this matter the particular act chosen is by no means without its use. All acts are not alike in this respect. One of the strongest cravings of love is for solidarity with the object of its affection. It would share the sorrows and misfortunes of the loved one. Nor does this craving halt at the merely useful. One of love's most powerful yearnings is to pour itself into acts *expressive* of such solidarity, and it finds in them a deep satisfaction. Evangeline

"Sat by some nameless grave, and thought that, perhaps, in its bosom
He was already at rest, and she longed to slumber beside him."

It could not be useful, but she yearned to be with

the loved one in his death. Romeo and Juliet die by each other's side. It could do them no good other than to satisfy the heart's great hunger. They would be with each other in death. Quasimodo creeps into the festering charnel-house, and starves to death by the body of La Esmeralda. It could do her no good, but he longed to pour out his devotion in such an act of fidelity, and that longing was stronger than life. He would be with her in her death. Longfellow, Shakespeare and Victor Hugo were not mistaken in their readings of the human heart. The world is full of such things. They gem the skies of history as stars jewel the midnight heavens, and glorify its brutal pages with their holy light.

The act of baptism answers to this craving of the convert's newborn love for solidarity with his Redeemer. It would be with him in his death. The convert is therefore "baptized into his death." It is not that it is a burial and resurrection that makes baptism so dear to the convert; it is that he is "buried *with Christ* in baptism," and rises *with him*. This sense of solidarity in baptism is not a new thought. It was the thought of the early Christians, and is so represented by Paul; and it was thus that it answered to the holy cravings of their passionate love. They longed to descend into the lowest grave of their Savior, to be buried with him, to be with him in his humiliation as in his victory, in his death as in his life. What other act could so mirror this feeling? Into what other act could hungry love pour itself with such satisfaction? What other act so perfectly gloves love's holy hand? That baptism should be a burial and resurrection is not a mere fancy. It has a deeper reason—the craving of the soul for an act expressive

of solidarity with Christ—a craving which, with our earthly loves, has often been stronger than life itself. Christian baptism is the most eloquent thing in the world. It chariots into expression the sublimest passion of the human heart—the newborn love of the soul for its Redeemer. Let none essay to receive it whose heart has not first become eloquent with love's great burden. Else it were mockery.

I cannot pass without saying that the setting forth of immersion as a mere legal condition of salvation is a woeful cheapening of baptism on its spiritual side; and it will hardly take place unless the preacher's own religion has already stiffened into legalism. A legal conversion and a legal Christian life is a wretched travesty on Christianity, and is obnoxious to all the thunders of Christ's invective against the legalism of his day.

Baptism, within and without, has been subjected to almost every mutilation which it were possible to conceive; and as it stands before us to-day, its marred visage speaks of the blind and unholy centuries through which it has passed. It is time to have done with cheapening baptism. The principle of Protestantism demands that it be restored to its true dignity and function as set forth in the New Testament; and it has been the aim of these chapters to show that reason makes the same demand. It is only a *shallow* rationalism that discounts baptism; for it finds its *raison d'etre* in the very laws of the human mind, particularly those of the heart, and a true rationalism requires its complete restoration to its Scriptural dignity and position. Reason, no less than Scripture, declares it to be by its very nature a proper condition of salvation, and one of the strong spiritual forces

in human redemption. It is time that the church ceased to join with the world in depreciating it. I shall close this chapter with a fact from history:

Jesus Christ never made any pretensions in science, and claimed nothing in literature, but he did undertake to found a kingdom that should not be moved. He professed to be a spiritual statesman of more than human wisdom. Has he made good that claim? Compare his work with that of the tallest sons of human genius, and be silent.

The church has ever been trying to mend Christianity, and has given us its thousand heresies and Roman Catholicism, beside all which Primitive Christianity shines in lonely splendor. Christian baptism proceeded from Christ. Let no one undertake to mend it who has not first matched his statesmanship.

Division III.

BAPTISM AS A MEASURE OF FAITH, AND AS A RATIFYING ACT.

CHAPTER I.

BAPTISM A MEASURE OF THE FAITH OF CONVERSION.

It was shown in the last chapter that baptism, in its character of a test-act, serves not only to reveal the deeper motives of the heart, but to repel all who are half-hearted in their desire to serve Christ. It now remains to consider the subject at greater length and from a different point of view.

The New Testament teaches that salvation is by faith. But by a moment's reflection we shall discover that faith is not a fixed quantity; and we stand face to face with a most important question—that of Spiritual Dynamics.

§ *I. Salvation is by Strong Faith.*

All the elements which enter into the composition of Christian faith may exist in any degree of strength or weakness. *Trust*, as is well known, may be strong or weak; the *force of will* by which men adhere to Christ may be strong or very feeble; and the *love* which men bear to him may range in its strength from a controlling passion to a faint and shadowy emotion. Faith, therefore, in all its elements, may be very weak or very strong, or may mark any intermediate degree between.

Now, what renders this a matter of the greatest importance is the fact that faith has a definite work to

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accomplish in the Christian life. It is not a mere fanciful condition of salvation, arbitrarily imposed on men, but is a necessary means in reaching a definite end. If it does this, it serves its purpose; if it does not, it is worthless, and rightly has no more to do with salvation from sin than any other useless thing. To suppose that God interposes any unnecessary condition between man and his salvation is to impeach his goodness. Faith is the power behind a righteous life. The end which faith is designed to serve is, to bind the soul to Christ in despite of many opposing influences, and carry it forward in a heroic effort to realize a righteous life. If it fail in this, its work is abortive. But this task is one of no small difficulty, and one which a *weak* faith cannot accomplish. Has Christianity, then, made salvation depend on *faith* (no matter how weak), or on *strong faith?* If it has done the former, it has committed a grave, if not fatal, blunder in spiritual dynamics. If it has committed such a blunder, how is it that it has not long ago perished? The inventor must understand physical dynamics; the statesman must understand and rightly measure the impalpable forces which sway great bodies of men; and Christianity must make no mistake in spiritual dynamics, or it is doomed. Nothing is more remarkable about Christianity than the wonder of its statesmanship; it has made no mistake there.

Let us say, then, that the Scriptures do not teach that a man is justified and saved simply by *faith*, but by *strong faith*. Paul, in his great argument on justification, describes Abraham's faith thus:

"Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy

seed be. And without being weakened in faith he considered his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old) and the deadness of Sarah's womb: yea, looking unto the promise of God, he wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. iv. 18-21).

Here is a description of strong, heroic faith; and immediately after speaking of it as "strong" and "fully assured," Paul proceeds: "WHEREFORE also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (v. 22). In the original narrative in Gen. xv., no such description is given, as this, of Abraham's faith. It is not said to be unwavering, strong, or fully assured, though the conditions show it to have been all these. Why does Paul, then, so describe it, and multiply epithets until the picture stands before us sublime? and then, why does he hinge his "wherefore" on this?

If justification may be reached by any faith, weak or strong, Paul's whole argument on justification falls to the ground. To prove that a giant can lift two thousand pounds does not prove that a weakling can do it. The fact that a strong, robust man is received at a recruiting-station furnishes no evidence that a weak one would be. The case of Abraham, both in itself and as stated by Paul, proves absolutely nothing further than that God will justify a man who has *strong* faith in him; and no more supports the conclusion that he will justify a man of weak faith, than that he will justify one who has no faith at all.

But when Paul comes to apply this argument from the life of Abraham to the case of conversion, why does he not draw the conclusion that the convert is

also justified by a *strong* faith? The answer is, that he does. His language is: "Now it was not written for his [Abraham's] sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (vv. 23, 24). In deducing the conclusion from Abraham's strong, fully assured faith, Paul says that "*it*" (this strong faith) is also reckoned unto us who believe on him, etc. What this phrase ("believe on him") means, I shall have occasion to show later on in this work; but that Christian faith must be strong faith, there is ample evidence near at hand to show. Let us pause here, however, to say that it is only truth to the facts that can lead Paul to give this bold characterization of Abraham's faith, since he is not aiming to prove that any particular degree of faith is essential, but to show that faith rather than works is the condition of justification. We have here, therefore, one of those side-lights on a great subject which are so characteristic of Paul. His logic is not cold and prosaic, but sunlit, and full of the small blemishes of one whose soul is on fire. His argument did not require this side-sweep into a kindred subject, but let us be thankful that he has let us know by a few bold strokes what he thought on this important matter. The Pauline idea is, that men are justified by *strong* faith.

But if Paul, in the rush of his argument, could not stay to say much on this subject, the Master did not lack for time to say some very definite things regarding it. When, at one time, he was being followed by "great multitudes" who seemed to be adhering to him by some feeble, insufficient bond,—trusting him some-

what, and being, perhaps, faintly loyal to him,—he turned to them and said:

"If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. . . . So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26-33).

This language is very positive; and certainly a bond which will snap all earthly ties, however dear, rather than forsake Christ, and which will draw men away from all that has been most cherished in their own lives, is not a weak one. The element of adherence in such a faith is nothing short of heroic. If these plain, faithful words of the Master are true, none but heroes can be his disciples. Will it be said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" The answer is, It is better to hear it now than to hear it from his own lips when it is too late. It was this one fact, laid to heart by the primitive church, that drove the little band like a plough-share through the Roman Empire, and gave Christianity to the ages. Let it be laid to heart now, and it will bring the heavenly Jerusalem down from God out of heaven in the twentieth century, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men. The master heresy of any age is, that justification may be reached by a weak faith. None but the heroic can ever be true and accepted disciples of Jesus Christ. To speak of an unheroic Christian is a contradiction of terms. Astonishing as Christ's demand may seem to some, it must be seen that he could not consistently have required less.

§ 2. *How Strong Must Faith Be?*

This now brings us to another urgent and vital question: If salvation be not simply by faith, but by strong faith, the question arises, How strong? Until this is decided no one can know when he has complied with this necessary condition of salvation. If salvation were simply by faith, it would be only necessary to know that one had faith, to be assured that he had come within reach of salvation. But, as it is by *strong* faith, he must first know *how* strong, and then measure his own faith to determine whether it be of the required degree of strength.

Must the convert's faith, then, be as strong as that of any of the mighty-hearted heroes of the past? Must it be as strong as Paul's or Luther's? If so, only a very few can ever be saved. That the great multitude of Christians in the time of Paul had a faith less strong than his, must be admitted: and yet, they were regarded as justified. Evidently this is not the measure. But, as we descend in the scale, we encounter a great peril—that of falling below the necessary degree. There ought to be some clearly defined limit.

If we would ascertain how strong faith should be it is necessary for us to consider that it is not a mere fanciful or arbitrary condition, but a means to an end—that it is designed to accomplish a certain object; and if, for any reason, it fails to do this, it is worthless, and is to be counted as not faith. Faith is the force behind the Christian life, behind a life of righteousness. This life must always be lived in the face of opposition. It is always a rowing against the stream. It must make head against the mighty sweep of the world's worldliness. It will always be opposed

by either persecution or seductive temptation. The force that shall plow its way through such obstacles must be a strong one, and strong *enough* to do *that thing*,—to live an independent life, and that under perpetual fire,—strong enough to master, and not be mastered. This requires much force of character—nay, even moral heroism. The opposition will come, not only from the world at large, but from friends—often from father, mother, sister, brother, wife, children, and, most fearful of all, from the passion-springs of one's own heart. To live against all this is to be a hero. His deeds may not be emblazoned to the world, but the true Christian is always God's hero. Just this much faith must accomplish, or be a failure. True, the Christian does not struggle alone; but the help he receives from above does not come in the shape of overcoming the foe *for* him, but in making him stronger to resist it; so it is his faith at last that must do the work. We discover, therefore, that faith need not be the strongest ever possessed by the great spiritual heroes of the past, but it must be strong, and *just so strong*, or it cannot be saving faith.

§ *3. The True Measure of Faith.*

Having seen that saving faith must be strong faith, and how strong it must be, we are next led to ask whether there be any means of *measuring* this faith. There is just as much need of a measure here as in mechanics, or in determining the stature of a recruit for the army. Now, the great strain, and the call for moral heroism in living the Christian life before the world, lies in *facing the world*, and standing in opposition to it,—in meeting its derision, its contumely, its hatred,—in cutting one's self off from its pleasures, and in breaking completely with the old life. The

strong shock of all these world- and old-life forces is felt in *profession*. It is there that the convert stands out before the world's fierce gaze and sounds the note of eternal battle with it. It is there that he renounces forever the past, and commits himself, in the eyes of all men, to a new life. It is there that in one concentrated shock the clash with the world-life begins. This act gathers into itself the great elements of the life-conflict, and is, in short, the *undertaking* of the battle. It is a great representative act, standing for all that is to follow, and subjecting the soul to the great moral strain of the Christian life.

If, on its positive side, it is the most suitable measure of the strength of faith, it is equally so when negatively considered. The Christian life must be lived before the world; therefore any faith which cannot face the world, cannot live that life,—cannot do faith's work, and is a valueless faith for the purposes of salvation. The great representative act of *profession* is therefore the natural and most fitting measure of the convert's faith*.

It need hardly be said that profession should be embodied in some strong, expressive, and profoundly impressive act. Such an act we have in *Christian baptism*. It marks a severance from the world as complete as actual burial, and a rising, afterward, to another life. Now, it is not simply by divine appointment that *profession* becomes a measure of faith, for that is in the very nature of the case; but it *is* by divine appointment that baptism, so fitly adapted to that end, is made the great act of *profession;* and it is

*Profession is not only a facing of the world and breaking with it, but the decisive breaking with the old life, private as well as public. It is then that the die is cast—the solemn commitment made.

as a solemn act of profession that baptism becomes a true measure of the strength of faith.

§ *4. The Application of the Measure.*

If a person believes the truth regarding Christ, repents of his sins and desires to serve him, and then goes forth with alacrity to make a public profession of his name, it is evident that his faith has been measured, and been found adequate to undertaking the Christian life before the world. But it is possible that the elements of faith may be present in a weaker degree than this. The truth may be believed, the heart may be touched, there may be a real desire to live a better life, and to unite one's self to Christ and enjoy the blessings of his salvation, but this desire may not be strong enough to cause the person to give up *all*—to snap all ties and bury all joys incompatible with a complete and public surrender. A *closet* faith need not be heroic; a *professing* faith must be, if the full meaning of profession is realized. There were many examples of this weaker type of faith in Christ's time; for we are told that "even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God" (John xii. 42, 43). There is no reason to suppose that this faith was mere intellectual assent, and that it did not involve the heart. It is designated by the phrase *to believe on*, which usually represents true and saving faith. These were not bad men fighting against their convictions, but weak men hesitating to follow their leadings into obloquy and persecution. If we may suppose Nicodemus to have been representative of this class, we have an amiable and truth-loving character, who credited Christ's

claims, and was in sympathy with his work—who believed in him and desired to learn of him—*in secret!* Here was a faith both of the understanding and of the heart, but it was weak, unheroic. Christ's dealing with him is very instructive. He declined to have any parley with him, but met him abruptly with these decisive words: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn. iii. 5). We are safe in saying that "born of water" refers to that great act of profession called baptism*, and that Christ informs this man that no faith which has not first carried one to a complete and public surrender will be accepted. Even though Christ had been only a man, he must have seen clearly at that time that the very existence of his kingdom was imperiled by the prevalence of this weak, unheroic faith; and he then and there built a wall against it strong and high, and to endure for all time. It was this: *The faith that shall admit one to the kingdom of God must accredit itself by public profession before it will be accepted.* No objection is made against this faith of the rulers, except that it was weak. They *did* love "the glory of God," but not so much as "the glory of men," and hence they stumbled at profession. Christ demands a strong faith, and therefore a *measured* faith. The application of the measure in this case excluded the most influential class of those who believed in him. They were excluded for no other reason than non-profession.

If baptism is a measure of the faith of conversion, at what time should it be applied? This is not a matter of indifference. A measure is worthless unless it

*See p. 77.

be used; and if it be not used until after that has been decided which it was designed to determine, it can be of no service.

When a farmer sells a bushel of wheat he uses a measure to determine the quantity. He must first measure the wheat to know that it is a bushel; and then, when this is determined, he receives his pay for a bushel. He cannot sell it for a bushel, and the buyer is not willing to pay him for a bushel, until it is measured. Thus the measuring becomes a condition in the transaction. But it would not, therefore, be true to say that the farmer receives the pay for the *measure*, but rather for the *wheat* which is measured. He receives pay simply for the wheat, for that alone; but he does not receive the pay *until* the wheat is measured. The wheat will not be received by the purchaser until it is measured. So likewise, if there may be faith of various degrees of strength, and if it be only faith of a certain strength that can be accepted as saving faith, the act of measuring the faith must enter into the transaction, and a man cannot count on having saving faith until he has measured it. Nevertheless, it does not follow that he is saved by the *measure*, but rather by the *faith*. With perfect consistency, therefore, baptism, the measuring act, might be a condition of salvation in a system of salvation by faith alone. This would be true, even though baptism possessed no other uses than this. There is no reason why those who advocate justification by faith alone should hesitate to admit that baptism is an antecedent to the granting of that blessing to faith. It would not be adding another condition *to* faith, but simply determining whether the candidate's faith fills out the required measure. That the faith of a man should be

measured before it is reckoned for righteousness, is a perfectly natural and necessary procedure, growing out of the fact that justification is not by faith simply, but by an adequate faith.

CHAPTER II.

BAPTISM AS A RATIFYING ACT.

§1. Nature and Uses of Ratification.

Closely related to this matter of measurement stands another fact of great importance and wide recognition. We saw in an earlier chapter that the requirement in our courts of law that witnesses shall testify under oath tends greatly to secure truthfulness; and we may add that this is in a sense the case even with truthful men. The fact that one is to speak under oath causes great carefulness to make each statement strictly accurate. The witness, by a painstaking review of the facts of memory, seeks to recall them fully in their true light; by reference to memoranda or concurrent events he seeks to correct any lapses of memory, and to refresh its hold upon every fact, and then in well-measured and carefully chosen terms, to state the exact truth. All this painstaking does not appertain to the ordinary statements of even truthful men, so that a solemn oath may not be without its use even with them. It secures, not simply truth-telling, but careful, well-considered, strictly accurate truth-telling. And for this reason in matters of such importance as those dealt with in our courts of law, it is the statement under oath that the court demands and which alone it will accept. The same statement may have chanced previously to be made by the man in the presence of judge and jury, but this will not be accepted. The reason of this is, that the statement under oath is regarded as the more reliable. The court demands the most absolute truth

and accuracy, and hence takes only the statement under oath.

There are many acts in our more important business transactions that partake largely of the same nature, and which may be spoken of as Ratifications.* A very common error in regard to these is that they are mere forms without any essential mental element. This is strangely incorrect; for they contain mental acts of the most decisive importance. When a man gives a promissory note to another, the language is in the present tense, "I *promise* to pay," not, "I *have* promised." The note is itself a promise, and *it is the promise made in the note that the payee relies upon*, and not any promise previously made. It is in view of this that he delivers the goods into the possession of the other party. A man signs and duly acknowledges the deed of a piece of real estate. It is not drawn in the past tense, and does not claim to make good a former transference of possession, but declares that the parties giving the deed, "*do grant, bargain, sell, and convey*," the property to the buyer. There is a mental act of conveyance of possession to the other *in* the giving of the deed; and this mental act is of great and decisive importance, as will be seen by considering that no deed can be made by an insane person, though he may be entirely capable of going through the form of making and acknowledging it. A preliminary understanding may have been fully reached and all done except the giving of the deed; but if the seller be taken suddenly insane, though still able to go through the form of deeding,

*I use the word *ratification* in the broad sense of all that *establishes* or *gives security* in business transactions as well as treaties.

the transfer cannot be made. And this will be solely for the reason that the seller is not capable of responsibly taking the *mental* step of conveying the property. There is a mental act of conveying possession in giving a deed, and *this mental act—not that involved in any preceding agreement—is the one which the buyer accepts and relies upon.* The same is true of giving a note. A note cannot be made by an insane person, though he may be perfectly competent to write and sign correctly, because he is not capable of making a responsible promise.

It is true that a part of the design of such documents is to bind others into whose hands the transaction of business may pass; but they are largely made use of when the expectation is that the person shall fulfill his own pledge; and it is only of such cases that I am speaking.

If it be claimed that the only aim of such documents is to secure fulfillment through the agency of the law of pledges which the person may refuse or neglect to fulfill himself, it must be answered that this is not correct. This, it is true, is an indirect and remote consideration; but few such transactions would ever be entered into if it were felt that they would end in a lawsuit. The primary and chief purpose of such documents is, that *they secure a more certain voluntary fulfillment of the covenanter's pledge.* The great object of such securities is to *insure the human will* against dishonesty, against weakness, against neglect and shiftlessness, and against change. They do this in various ways—usually by exposing the covenanter to some penalty, loss, or inconvenience, and by rendering any attempt at non-fulfillment futile.

A dishonest man may make an oral bargain with

the intention of getting property into his possession, or gaining some advantage, without due return; but if required to give security such as will either necessitate fulfillment of his agreement or expose him to even greater loss or inconvenience than such fulfillment would involve, he will at once refuse. If, however, he shall return later and offer to give the required security, we shall know that something important has happened—the dishonest purpose has given place to an honest one; and the mental act which takes place in the ratification will be sincere and genuine. Ratification secures a sincere pledge from an insincere man; and the other party now has good reason to believe that he will fulfill his obligation. The act of will contained in the ratification is now trusted.

But dishonesty of purpose is not the only cause of non-fulfillment of obligations, and those steps which have for their object the insurance of the human will are not confined to such cases. An honest young man proposes to buy a farm. The preliminaries regarding price, times of payments, etc., are all arranged, when the seller informs him that he must have a mortgage. The young man does not understand this, and is told that in case every payment is made on time, the mortgage will have no effect of any kind upon the transaction; but in case he should fail to make his payments as stipulated, the mortgage could be foreclosed, and he would lose both the farm and all he had previously paid. The young man regards this as a very serious matter, and asks time to think it over. He had been ready to close the bargain with the sincere intention of fulfilling its every condition, but now he hesitates and desires time to consider. What

will he consider? The question of his *ability* to fulfill his obligations. He asks himself what would be done if crops should fail, if prices should fall, if stock should die, if he should be ill. He faces each contingency and looks at it long and searchingly. As he does so, his undertaking appears much more serious and difficult than he at first supposed; and the question often arises, Shall I not give it up? He sees that success may require not only hard work, but severe self-denials through many years, and heroic energy such as he has never put forth. He ponders and weighs long and carefully, and at last says, *I will*. He returns, and signs the mortgage which bargains to pay for the farm under these serious conditions. What has happened? This young man was ready to make the bargain before with an *honest* purpose; but he was not ready to make it under these conditions. *A weak, ill-considered purpose has been changed to a strong, heroic purpose.* A purpose which was inadequate for so serious an undertaking has been changed into one which is adequate. The young man may never have put forth a strong act of will before. This required security *has drawn a heroic purpose from an unheroic youth.* The act of will put forth *in* giving this security is the one which the law accepts and which the seller accepts—and it should be so, for it is worth vastly more than the other.

But this counting the cost and reaching a well-considered, heroic purpose is not the only effect that this security is to have on the young man's will. It will also safeguard it against change. The young man is honest, but honesty is sometimes a matter of strength of character. Under stress of great difficulties even an honest desire to fulfill one's obligations

may give way. But even though the time shall never come when the young man will cease to intend to fulfill his obligations, it is quite possible that there may be a diminution of his energy. Will-force is very fluctuating. We are sometimes much stronger than at others. The tendencies to neglect and ease-taking or pleasure-seeking furnish a well-nigh universal temptation to relax effort. The seller of the farm must be protected against this danger. The security which the young man gives will do this: for the same jeopardy which raised his purpose up to the heroic point still exists and tends to hold it there. In giving the mortgage the young man has burned the bridge behind him, and he cannot retreat without disaster. There may be many times, through the coming years of struggle, when he will be tempted to give up the effort, but the thought of losing all holds him to his purpose, and at last, scarred by toil and hardship, he wins the battle. He has won two prizes—a home, and mighty-hearted manhood; and it has all come of his giving security. The security had first the effect to raise his will to heroic strength; and this well-considered, strong purpose was, from its very nature, in the least degree subject to remission, while it received continual re-enforcement through the continued jeopardy which the security imposed. The moral effect of security is, therefore, (1) to render purpose honest, (2) to cause a careful counting of the cost, (3) to raise purpose to the adequate degree of strength, and (4) to safeguard it from change.

Many of the transactions of ordinary business life are so small, and involve so little loss in case of non-fulfillment, that they are permitted to pass without security; but in all more important covenants and con-

tracts means are resorted to to render fulfillment more certain through an insurance of the human will. And it is the act of will which takes place *in* giving these securities that both the law and the other contracting party accept and rely upon. This is evident from the fact that insanity renders all such acts nugatory.

From the fact that this mental act is the one that is trusted, it follows that the property stipulated in the contract is not given into possession until *after* this trusted mental act takes place. If a note for money is being given, the money is not paid over until the note is duly signed and delivered. There is a seeming exception to this in cases where a small part of the sum stipulated is advanced for the purpose of binding a bargain or some other object. But this forms really no exception; for the amount thus advanced is small, while the object of security is to protect large interests. Such prepayments belong to the category of such small transactions as require no security.

It is important to note also that if the delivery of the possessions were to take place *before* the ratifying act, its value would well-nigh, if not wholly, be destroyed. The great reason, in cases where the promising party is expected to execute his own pledge, why security is required, is that so great a stake cannot be risked on his unsupported promise. But this is just what would be done if the property were transferred to him before security is given. If parties were to take each other as husband and wife before the marriage act, it would render that act worthless and result in nothing short of the overthrow of society. To transfer possession before ratification is to sacrifice the very object for which ratification is required.

§ 2. *An Act of the Nature of Ratification is Needed in the Covenant of the Soul with God.*

The bearing of all this on the divine-human covenant is very important. It is universally recognized that the infirmities of the human will are too great to admit of its being trusted in the more important matters of business, *unless the contracting act of will be caused to take place under conditions that will render it not only honest, but strong, well-considered, and permanent.* Now, while it is not probable that any one will ever seek to enter into covenant with God with fraudulent designs, and by sharp practice obtain the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and at last heaven itself, it is possible that all the other forms of incompetency may characterize the act of will by which the soul may surrender itself to God and devote itself to his service. The convert may not thoroughly count the cost, the strength of his purpose may be insufficient, and that purpose may be subject to change. The question then arises, Shall all more important business transactions take place only on the basis of an *insured will*, while the greatest and most weighty covenant in all the soul's history shall be abandoned to the uncertainties of human weakness and shiftlessness? While the business world must have a man's best and mightiest purpose, and takes measures to secure it, shall the greatest transaction of all rest on an inferior purpose, and no measures be taken to secure the best? If the covenanting act of the human will with God is to be the best of which the convert is capable, it must take place under conditions which will render it strong and well-considered, and secure as much as possible its permanency. Are there any conditions in the religious sphere which correspond, in their effect upon the will,

with security or ratification in the secular world? There are principally two:

One of these is Publicity—the embodiment of the mental act of surrender to Christ and devotement to his service in an appointed act of profession. It is publicity that gives security to nearly all forms of ratification. A deed must be recorded in the official records to make it valid. It is a published bargain. A promissory note drives all its validity from publicity. The law takes cognizance of an oral contract and enforces it whenever it can be proved, but the difficulty is to prove it. The written note in the hands of the payee can be shown to whomsoever he will, and to the very authorities that will enforce its collection. It is potentially a published bargain, and herein lies its great value as security. In the marriage ceremony the mental act of taking each other as husband and wife, by the parties, is made to take place publicly; and between the act so taking place and the same act allowed to take place privately would lie all the difference between social well-being and a profound moral disaster to society. This mental act taking place in a duly appointed form of public profession is worth vastly more than the same act without such protecting conditions. The publicity causes caution in taking the step, with a more complete and well-considered commitment to lifelong union, and cuts off the possibility of retreat without disgrace. For these reasons moral society, in view of the sacred interests involved, demands that no such giving and taking shall be recognized except when embodied in a public act of profession. Precisely the same principles are involved in a public religious profession. It puts purpose to a certain strain. It is crossing a line forever in the sight of

all men. It is a great step profoundly changing the subject's relation to his fellowmen. It will not be taken hastily or without counting the cost, nor without a struggle. From it there can be no retreat without disgrace. The act of will involved in such a step is strong enough to face the world. A will less strong will be turned back until it gains the necessary strength; and then it will be a mighty-hearted act of the soul. Those who have baptized many know what this means to them. It is an awful moment. It is the best and mightiest act of willing of which the soul is capable. Afterward, the public profession tends to insure this commitment against change.

A tall, strong spirit, a foremost leader with voice and pen among the Disciples of Christ, and one of the purest and most devout of men, who has now passed to his reward, said before a public audience, some years before his death, that there had been times of darkness and discouragement in his religious life when he believed he would have given up all and been lost, but for the fact that he had solemnly professed Christ before the world. When the heart sank, honor had come to the rescue until the darkness had passed and the heavens grew bright again. He had burned the bridge behind him; there was no retreat except across his prostrate honor. The mental act by which he had given himself to Christ in his baptism, was *insured*. It was his best and mightiest at the time, and it was safe-guarded against change.

But there is another condition that may add value to that mental act by which we enter into covenant with God. If the act of profession be one of profound sacredness and impressiveness, it will cause great thoughtfulness and a deepened sense of obliga-

tion when taking it; it will help the soul to its holiest surrender. Were the mental act of surrender to Christ embodied simply in some form of oral profession—confession with the mouth—it would not be the best of which the soul is capable. It would lack the infinite pathos of burial with Christ and the profounder sense of death to sin and resurrection to righteousness. Christian baptism is vastly more thrilling and exalting than verbal confession, and the soul should be at its best when passing into Christ. There will be higher, holier surrender under such conditions. It will be the soul's *best*. Now, in view of human weakness, thoughtlessness and changeableness,—of the great unreliability of the human will,—and in consideration of the vast interests at stake, should not Christ demand the soul's best before bestowing upon it all the blessings of redemption and counting it saved? In all ages and climes the unreliability of the human will has been recognized as rendering it unfit to be trusted in important covenants and business transactions without subjecting it to certain bracing influences; and only those acts of will which take place under such conditions are trusted in important matters. Is what is not good enough for business good enough for the soul's eternal welfare? The placing of remission of sins before baptism is thought to be in the interest of spirituality; it is in the interest of spiritual shiftlessness and self-deception. It admits to salvation on a half purpose. It offers heaven's best, and takes man's poorest. In all important business the will is *insured;* in the covenant with God it should be insured—made the best and safest possible. *Baptism for remission of sins*

means man's highest, holiest surrender for the remission of sins.

In view of this principle, what should be done with the penitent who, on his knees in his closet, shall surrender himself to Christ? Doubtless such an act should have some effect on the divine attitude toward him, and would be accepted as the sweet incense of a penitent heart; but the conditions are not such as to render this the strongest and holiest surrender of which the soul is capable, and the issues are so great as to demand the best. According to a principle recognized and acted upon by the entire human race, through all time, the bestowment of the great blessings of redemption should await the mighty-hearted, well-buttressed and safe-guarded surrender which takes place in a solemn act of profession. Baptism is such an act, and therefore the true point of accepted surrender. It should be, as the Scriptures make it, the covenanting act between the soul and its God.

This statement of the situation, however, may not be quite true to the facts. If baptism be the point of *acceptable* surrender, the tendency will be to make it the point of *primary* surrender, and to hasten the act to the soul's need for that purpose. When a man and woman desire to take each other as husband and wife, they would do so the moment the desire arises, if such a step could be morally and legally taken in private. But as this cannot be, they hasten the marriage act as much as possible to suit their convenience, and then both *mentally* and *formally* take each other as husband and wife in that act. The mental act which takes place in marriage has never taken place before. The most that the parties have

ever done was to *promise* that they would take this step. To claim that the mental step taken in marriage has previously taken place in the engagement, is to speak very loosely, and confound promise with fulfillment. The human mind is disinclined to attempt what is impossible. A mother may be hourly expecting the return of a long-absent child, whom she longs to embrace, but she will not, therefore, rush to the door before the child arrives, and hug vacancy. Her caress, both mental and physical, will await the child's appearance. So of surrender to, and entrance into union with, Christ. It will not be likely to take place where Christ has not promised to meet the soul in acceptance, but will hasten to make that strong-hearted, well-fortified surrender which he has appointed to take place in baptism. If, however, the heart should overflow and cast itself at the feet of Christ before that time, it should know that its emotion and moral force have not been measured, and that the mental act of commitment on which the whole future life is to rest, and in view of which the unspeakable blessings of salvation are to be granted, should be the best considered, strongest, holiest and best protected act of the entire life; and it should, with much carefulness, with fear and trembling, with high and holy resolve, with yearning affection, pass into union with Christ under those conditions which will both measure the spiritual act and render it strongest. Baptism is by its nature the spirit's profoundest and strongest commitment to Christ. The great surrender should be a condition of the great salvation.

CHAPTER III.

WHY BAPTISM SHOULD BE AN ANTECEDENT CONDITION OF SALVATION.

It has doubtless occurred to the thoughtful reader, ere this, to ask one question. A moment's reflection will reveal the fact that at least two of the objects of ratification, as herein set forth, are accomplished before the act itself takes place. It is the *requirement* of a public profession of Christ which causes (a) the careful counting of the cost, and (b) the strengthening of the purpose to take that step; and these things are accomplished, not *in* the act of profession, but *before* it. This is a fact of some importance, and not to be overlooked in an investigation like this. If the requirement of a complete and public surrender of the world-life causes a struggle in reaching the *determination* to take the step, and if through this struggle the weaker faith reaches the stage of heroic strength and efficiency, why does not the mere fact of reaching such a *purpose* adequately measure the faith? And if the formation of such a *purpose* measure the faith, determining it to be of the requisite strength, why not count it for righteousness at that point? Why not, therefore, decide that, as soon as faith rises in the heart and reaches the point of *resolving* to face the world in an act of profession, renouncing all, the sinner shall be accepted and accounted saved? It might be so if we could decide affirmatively one question: Does the resolution to take a step always involve the same mental force as the taking of the step itself? Does it subject the will to the same strain?

If it always does, it forms a reliable measure of the mental force required for the act. Does it? It must be confessed that in many cases such is the case; while, in many others, it is very far from being so; and these two classes of cases are differentiated by a very important principle.

§ *I. The Degree of Power which we Possess in Any Direction is not a Matter of Consciousness, but of Experimental Discovery.*

A laboring man engages to work a month for a certain contractor. He is accustomed to the kind of work which he will be required to do, and knows just how much strength it will demand, and that he possesses that strength. He knows, also, how much conative force and resolution are necessary for the execution of his task, since he has done such work many times before. After due deliberation, he decides positively that he will perform the work. Just such decisions have carried him through many a similar undertaking, and he has the best of reasons for believing that his present resolution is entirely equal to the task. Physical strength, skill, and resolution are all sufficient; and he knows this. He knows both the work and himself by actual experience; and, if he goes about it immediately, there is little danger of failure, either in resolution or power. But let us suppose that a very different proposition is presented to him. His country is attacked by a foe, and he is asked to go to her defense. He enters the army as a raw recruit. He intends to fight bravely. Will he do so? No one knows; he himself does not know. When he meets the enemy, he may take fright and flee like a coward. If he is very sure of himself, and boasts much of his valor, we are led to suspect it; if he is quiet, with a

humble estimate of his courage, we shall not be surprised to find him the hero of the hour. Many a braggart is a coward, and many a quiet, unassuming man is a hero in a crisis. The self-estimation evidently can not guide us here. Why not? *The amount of force, in any direction, which a man possesses is not a matter of consciousness, but of experimental discovery.* The boy cannot tell how far he can leap until he tries it; the man cannot tell how much he can lift till he tries it. In perpetual darkness, we should never discover that we had the sense of sight; nor, in absolute silence, the sense of hearing.

In 1861, a certain tanner lived at Galena, Ill. The war of the rebellion broke out. He joined the fighting hosts. He rose higher, higher, higher. Then the eye of the nation was upon him. At last, the great army of the Union was given into his hands. He conquered—after all others had failed. He carved his name high as the greatest general of his time. But the world did not know this in 1861; and *he* did not know it, for he was a humble man—humble as are the great. Had the war not occurred, Grant the tanner would never have known Grant the general. He knew, in 1861, that he had *some* courage, *some* mental ability, *some* judgment, *some* skill; but he did not know that these mental qualities towered so high in his character as to rank him with the greatest generals of the world; and he could never know this until he put them to the test.

Every young man's life is a progress of experimental self-discovery. The occupations which men choose usually reflect their best judgment of themselves; and what a commentary this, on the principle we are considering! Benjamin Franklin chooses the trade of a

journeyman printer. Galileo chose the profession of medicine, and it was not until afterward, while engaged in some art studies requiring a knowledge of geometry, that he discovered himself. Dwight L. Moody felt that possibly he might succeed as a shoe-clerk; and as little dreamed that he was the greatest evangelist of the age, as that he was the angel Gabriel. Are not the galleries of biography full of such cases? Wordsworth believed that most of the best poets are never discovered, and wrote:

> "Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
> By circumstance to take unto the height
> The measure of themselves, these favored beings,
> All but a scattered few, live out their time,
> Husbanding that which they possess within,
> And go to the grave unthought of. Strongest minds
> Are often those of whom the noisy world
> Hears least."

On the other hand, we know but too well that many of those who attempt the muse have mistaken their powers. In seeking the less ambitious occupations, also, overestimation is probably quite as common as underestimation. These cases are not likely to find their way into history, but the business and professional world is strewn with such failures. No such misjudgments, either way, need ever occur, if the amount of a man's ability in any direction were a matter of consciousness. In those respects in which a man has *tried* himself, he knows his power, and in no other. The laborer who engaged to do a month's work knew the measure of his force, both physical and mental, in that direction; and his resolution to perform it was a sufficient warrant of its fulfillment, because he had already had similar experience. But

when a youth determines to achieve the work of a great statesman, he may feel very sure that he will accomplish it, but we know that most such resolutions are ill-founded. It requires vastly more ability, even in the matter of *will*, to do the high work of a statesman than to *resolve* to do it. It requires more valor to face an enemy in battle than to *resolve* to do so. It is a law of the human mind, that the measure of its force, in any direction, is a matter of experimental discovery, and cannot be determined by introspection. So far as we have been put to the test, we know our power, but no further.

§ 2. *The New-Born Faith of the Convert is Subject to this Law.*

The convert's faith is a new and untried force in his life. It has never been there before, and he has no experience regarding its power. He knows that he believes Jesus to be the Messiah, that his affections go out to him, that he has the spirit of consecration to his service. He may enter his closet, and fall upon his knees in devout prayer and surrender to him. So far he knows his faith; he knows, at least, that it is beautiful sentiment. But is it more? Is it a strong force? He may think so, but he cannot know. How strong must it be? The strongest force in his life, and capable of controlling and subduing every other. It must be strong enough to snap all opposing earthly ties and bear him forth upon a life of moral heroism, or founder at the very start. It must be the motive force behind a new life of trial and great difficulty. Is it meet for this? If not, it cannot do faith's work in saving the soul—cannot be saving faith. It contains a *resolution* to do all this. It is the stronger for

this, but does this resolution adequately measure its strength?

On the night of his betrayal, in the quiet of the Mount of Olives, Jesus said to his disciples:

"All ye shall be offended in me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter answered and said unto him, If all men shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples" (Mt. xxvi. 31-35). A few hours after, they had all forsaken him, and Peter, with curses and oaths on his lips, had denied him thrice. Can any one question the sincerity of these disciples when making this pledge? Had they not also most solemnly and impressively been put on their guard, and warned that there was trouble in prospect? Did they not love the Master? Did they not believe in him? and were they not devoted to him? All this was true, and they knew it to be so, but they did *not* know how *strong* their resolve was. A few hours more, and all was over; they had fled. It is written in lurid lines, and let all men heed the warning: DANGER HERE! An earnest purpose made but a few hours before, in the quiet of the Mount of Olives, flies like chaff before the wind in the judgment hall of Christ's enemies. In the light of this appalling fact, how dare we say to the man who, on his knees in the quiet of his closet, may devote himself to Christ, resolving that he will afterward confess him before his enemies—that his faith is

a world-facing faith? How shall we say that a resolution in the seclusion of the closet is equal in force to a profession before men?

But before we leave this appalling example, given for our admonition, let us note one other fact concerning it, which is of great significance. The resolution of these disciples to stand by the Master, even unto death, was not strong enough for the purpose—but they *did not know* this. They were completely self-deceived. So strong was their assurance that they—probably for the first time—called in question the Master's own words, who solemnly and sadly told them of their weakness. They were also firm believers in the truth of their Scriptures, and Jesus had showed them that these Scriptures had predicted their fall. Yet, in face of all this, they renewed their assurance in the most positive terms.

The truth stands out in bold relief, that there is a strong tendency in the human mind to self-deception at this point—so strong that, in this case, the word of the Master himself could not dissipate it. Lord Bacon taught that there are certain constitutional infirmities, or biasing tendencies of the human mind,—called by him "idola,"—which must be guarded against if man would conquer nature. Men of science, in their physical researches, have sought to guard against these tendencies; and the human intellect has gone forth on a career of brilliant discovery. Are there no such defects—no "idola"—in the mind's action on religious subjects? They glare upon us from every side. The heart is the very hot-bed of such deceptions. A greater than Bacon has declared it to be "deceitful above all things"; but the deceit is so profound that it is undiscovered, and even the watchmen

on the walls of Zion do not give the alarm, but are persuaded that a resolution in the closet to profess Christ before the world, is a safe measure of saving faith. Shall we go on forever stumbling into the pit where Peter fell, never even dreaming that it is not safe?

In evangelistic work the writer has often watched persons in his audience giving, night after night, eager attention to the truth spoken, and seeming to be deeply moved by it. He has then visited these persons at their homes and found their hearts tender. They had realized their sin, had sorrowed over it, and had determined to forsake it—they had repented, and had resolved to give themselves up to the Master's service. I have said to them, When will you profess the Saviour? "To-night," has often been the reply. The evening came, the invitation was given, but they did not come. Persons have been known to come, evening after evening, with the intention of professing Christ, to stand pale during the invitation, to go away without doing it, and finally never to do it. The opposition, the contumely, the ridicule, of old associates, which they knew would follow such a step, stayed their feet when they would come to Christ. Their resolution in the quiet of their homes was not equal, as a measure of their faith, to a public profession before the world. Such a faith as theirs could not live the Christian life before men. Had I said to them, in the quiet of their homes: Only believe; give yourself up to Christ, and take him as your Redeemer, and that moment you are saved—they would have done so at once; and, on a faith which could not carry them one step in the Christian life before the world, and which could not break the earthly ties

which Christ declares must be broken before one can become his disciple. Had I done this, I should have done them a great wrong; I should have deceived them. I should have cried peace in the midst of danger.

So unreliable is the purpose to profess, even when made with a view to speedy fulfillment. But the case is far worse when the profession is contemplated at some indefinite time in the future. The very fact of postponement argues unfavorably, and strongly implies that the heart is not ready. The purpose to become a follower of Christ and profess his name is sometimes formed even years before repentance, so far is it from being a true criterion of the state of the heart. We have therefore, in this, no reliable measure of the strength of faith. The purpose may be weak or strong, but its strength cannot be determined by looking within. The law which determines that the power of new and untried faculties of our nature cannot be measured by introspection, but only by acts which call forth their strength, finds no exception in the convert's faith. It is a new force within the life, and, like all such forces, must be measured by trial. The puddle looks as deep as the sky, and seems to embosom the stars; but stir it, and you discover its shallowness.

Thus, a law of the human mind demands that an act embodying the common strain of the Christian life should be provided at this point of the convert's experience. Such an act is Christian profession. If the gospel be preached faithfully, and baptism be represented in its full and true character, as a complete severance (burial) from the old life and entrance upon a new, it will form a true and adequate measure

of the convert's faith. That faith may be strong or weak. If strong, it will proceed at once to profession; if weak, it should be halted at this point and compelled to rise to the higher level, and assured of no acceptance till it does.

Of course, it were possible for God to inform the convert of the real value of his faith by a divine communication; but, unless this were accredited by some decisive miracle, it would open the way to all the extravagances of mysticism. Whatever might be thought of the method of miraculous revelation, it is certain that God has not chosen that way. Instead, he has appointed at this stage of conversion an act which subjects faith to the common strain of the Christian life, and thereby proves its adequacy for the new undertaking; and has, with perfect consistency, placed at this point its acceptance. That a man should be permitted to count himself saved before he knows that he has saving faith, would be absurd. Profession (baptism) is the divine measure of such faith. Baptism, as a condition of remission of sins, is a legitimate sequence of the doctrine of salvation by an adequate faith.

If it be asked whether it would not be better to accept the sinner's faith, however weak, and then help him to reach the higher stage, rather than leave him to struggle alone till he reaches it, I have only to say that there is no such alternative. The incipient believer is not without help where he stands. He is under the play of mighty influences designed to raise him from the lowest depths of sin and bring him to the point of professing Christ. The Holy Spirit is not yet given as an indwelling guest, but it does not follow that He is idle and is not doing all that is best

at this point. Pardon is not yet granted, but its withholding is a tremendous motive to strengthen resolve. Take care how you remove this mighty gospel force at this point! To count the convert saved and admit him to all the privileges of divine sonship at this stage would not be to improve his condition, but to make it vastly worse. There is a mighty gospel force now operating to overcome the very defect that must be mastered before he can reach the point where Christ will accept him—that of forsaking all for Christ (Lk. xiv. 26, 27); and the assurance of salvation at this stage would nullify that force.

What was it that arrested his steps when in the midst of the sinful life, but the thought that he was *lost?* Shall that powerful motive, which has brought him thus far, be now withdrawn, leaving him stranded with a half-faith? He is still lost if the faith that saves must be a world-conquering force. Shall one of the mightiest forces of the gospel to lift him to a practical faith be now withdrawn? What enemies are like those who hide us from ourselves and charm us with siren songs in the presence of danger! Christianity is not simply love, it is *wise* love, it is sure-footed love, it is great statesmanship. But great statesmanship is more than sentiment; it involves a just measurement of forces to the attainment of ends.

Faith is one of the forces of salvation. It has something to *do*. When it is capable of fulfilling its purpose, it is counted; when it is not, the sinner is turned back until this factor is supplied in something more than a sentimental degree. Justification is by a faith which is capable of filling faith's office. Christianity is in earnest; it is intent on accomplish-

ing its purpose. It is not *playing* at human salvation. It means to *take man out of sin;* and it cannot count him saved, till his faith is something more than a beautiful sentiment.

§3. An Objection: What will become of those Who Die before Baptism?

It remains to consider an objection which is often urged against the doctrine of baptism as a condition of the remission of sins.

If a man's sins are not remitted, and if he is not saved until he is baptized, what will become of him if he should die before he has an opportunity to be baptized? If his opportunities for salvation are limited to this life, as is so generally held, and if he goes into eternity unsaved, must he not be lost? On the other hand, if he would not in this case be lost, does it not follow that he was in a saved state before his death, and consequently before his baptism? And if one man may be saved before baptism, why not all?

If baptism, as a condition of remission of sins, involves the consequence that any who may die before they are able to be baptized will be lost, it is useless to deny that it is a horrible doctrine, and that if true, it ought not to be.

Perhaps it will help us to realize the situation if it be said that baptism is not alone obnoxious to this objection, but that faith in Christ involves the same difficulty in its most appalling form. If faith in Christ be a condition of salvation, and if there be no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved (Acts iv. 12), what will become of the man who is living up to the light he has, to the best of his ability, and who would gladly accept Christ if he had the opportunity, but who dies without the knowledge of

him? Will he be lost? This is a very serious question when we consider that but a small fraction of the human race have ever heard of Christ, and that where there is one penitent person who dies before baptism is possible, there are millions of truth-loving souls who pass into eternity without a knowledge of Christ. The question in its most appalling form lies, not against baptism, but against faith. Will the good man who dies without having an opportunity to believe in Christ be lost? If so, it is a horrible doctrine; if not, then will it not follow that he was saved before his death, without faith in Christ? and, if one may be so saved, why not all? and how is faith a condition of salvation if millions may be saved without it? When we have disposed of this difficulty, we shall find that the objection in regard to baptism has also been answered. If those multitudes who have no opportunity to believe in Christ may be saved without faith in him, while faith in him still remains a condition of salvation, why may not the penitent, dying before baptism, be saved without it, while baptism still remains a condition of salvation? Or if those truth-loving persons who would gladly accept Christ if they had the opportunity, will be permitted to do so in eternity and then be accepted on such faith, why may not the penitent who had not the opportunity to make a profession here, be permitted to profess Christ before the heavenly hosts in some suitable way that God may determine, and be accepted on such profession? Faith and baptism stand in precisely the same relation to the difficulty involved in the limit of probation, and the reasoning that would sweep away baptism as a condition of remission, would carry faith with it in the same ruin.

But these considerations do not quite answer the question in relation to the person whose faith is too feeble to bear him forward to profession. The reason why he does not profess Christ is not that he has not the opportunity, but that he is not *ready*. There is need of some spiritual increment in his case before profession is possible. If while struggling for more faith death should overtake him, would he be lost? Without question, such a conclusion would be revolting. But does not the doctrine of salvation by an adequate faith necessitate it? We read of the "spirits of just men made perfect." This spiritual perfecting does not take place before death, for none are perfect in this life. If spiritual completion belongs to the future world, it may well include those whose faith is passing to its higher stage; or that passage may be consummated through the profound moral influence of death itself. Even the facing of death by wicked men bears in upon them with tremendous religious power, shaking them with terror and quickening the conscience. What will be the moral influences of death we cannot know, but that momentous change cannot be without them. The Scriptures know nothing of any doctrine of probation that would deny to an ascending faith a chance to reach its goal.

Thus, the doctrine of salvation by an adequate faith, measured by baptism as a solemn act of profession, involves no greater difficulties than the doctrine of salvation by faith without regard to its strength, while it has the double recommendation that it possesses a sweet reasonableness and is supported by Scriptural authority. Not only do the Scriptures teach clearly that baptism is a condition of

the remission of sins, but the doctrine of justification by an adequate faith—which they also unquestionably teach—shows why it should be so. They furnish the rational postulate for their own complete vindication. Baptism is a measure of spiritual quantity; spiritual quantity entitles to salvation; the measure is useless unless applied before acceptance. Faith is the *spiritual* condition of salvation; baptism, as an act of profession, is the *measuring* condition.

PART III.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF REMISSION.

Any justification of the reasons underlying the Scriptural doctrine of baptism in order to the remission of sins, must be incomplete without some consideration of the nature of that divine act which the Scriptures call Remission. It is believed that most of the objections which are supposed to lie against this doctrine have their origin in an inadequate conception of what we are to understand by "remission of sins."*

But have we any data for such an examination beyond the bare statements of the Scriptures on the subject? How is it possible for us to look into the divine Mind and take note of its workings? This we cannot do, but we are taught that we are made in the image of God, and this has vast corroboration in the fact that we can follow the divine thoughts in nature. The laws of nature are God's thoughts, and we can understand them. The horse or dog cannot understand the mechanism of a watch, but the child can do so because its mind is like that of the maker. When we are told in the Scriptures of God's justice, love and truth, we look within our own minds for the

* It has been recently claimed by some that "remission of sins" means *severance from the love and practice of sin*, and that "justification" means a *rightening*, or *making righteous;* but it does not seem to me that sound exegesis supports these senses. In this investigation I shall use these terms in their usual sense, "remission" signifying *discharge from penalty, forgiveness, pardon*. See Webster's International Dictionary, the Standard Dictionary, and Thayer's N. T. Greek *Lexicon* under *aphesis*.

meaning which we are to attach to these terms. If they do not mean with God what they mean with us, revelation is a blank. But, most of all, God has given to us in the incarnation the "express image of his person." We have known this Being and found his character to be that of a noble and perfect man. His mind was like our minds in all that is best in them. These facts may form the basis for certain reverent and careful reasonings on this subject, especially such as are in support or illustration of the manifest teachings of the Scriptures. We can only understand God through the workings of our own minds, and it is certainly legitimate to question their instinctive operations with close care when they seem to antagonize the teachings of the Scriptures. What, then, is the nature of that divine act which we variously call pardon, forgiveness, remission, as judged from our own mental constitution?

When one person wrongs another, it is natural for the injured party to feel *angry*, or *offended*. If this were the only effect upon us of an offending act, and if our anger were permitted to act without restraint, we should proceed at once to execute vengeance. With savages and certain men of a lower type, this is what actually takes place. But in nobler minds, an offending act will be followed by a mixed result. The offender will not cease to be loved, and pity and mercy will struggle with anger. The understanding will then be called in to decide upon a course to be pursued in view of all the circumstances, and of the conflicting feelings. When this decision is reached, the will adopts it; the mind says to itself, I will do this. In this act of the will, the mental process reaches its consummation, and it remains only to

carry into execution the mind's decision. In this process there have been: (1) a single feeling; (2) a conflict of feelings resulting in a complex emotion; (3) intellection; and (4) decision, or an act of the will.

In just what course these steps will issue, we cannot definitely predict, but, if the offended party be just, noble and benevolent, and possessed of wisdom, the offender's relation to him will be determined by these qualities. There will certainly be a painful breach between them, and, if the wronged one be in a position of authority, he may decide upon some form of punishment, or, if not, may deliver the offender up to the constituted authorities. These things he will have a *right* to do, and *may* do them from a sense of duty to both the offender and others.

Now, if under these circumstances the wronged party learns that the offender has repented of his wrong, a change will take place in his own mind. He will not be able to avoid this. A spirit of revenge bordering on an insane passion might not be thus affected, but this would not be normal. The repentance of an enemy will have an effect on the state of feeling of every well-constituted mind, and this effect will follow *immediately*. Even if the injured one were commanded not to feel differently, or to postpone his change of feeling, he could not do it. According to a law of his mental constitution, the effect of the repentance must be as certain as was that of the offense, and it will begin to take place regardless of time-setting.

But what will the effect of this repentance be?

Its first effect will be to dispel the anger, or feeling of offense, and replace it by a feeling of approval.

Is this change of feeling in the mind of the injured party what is meant by *remission?* If so, remission would be very far from even mentally disposing of the case. It cannot properly be called remission, or pardon. The effect of the repentance on the injured man's mind has just begun. What it will be when completed does not yet appear. The mind is not all feeling, and this is not the only feeling that will share in determining the result. A part of the change involved in remission has taken place and the relations of the parties are more pleasant, but there are certain other faculties yet to act upon the case, and these faculties often demand that the feeling shall not have its way —at least without modification or restraint. As the result of the offense was complex, so may that of the repentance be also. Shall the injured party at once erase the unpleasant past and fully reinstate the offender in his former relations? Whether he shall do so or not, it is important to note that he *has* not done so, and has not even decided to do so. But is he not in justice bound to do so? He is not in *justice* bound to pardon the offender at all, much less on any particular condition.* God's pardon of sin is not an act of justice, but of mercy. Pardon is always an act of clemency. We are saved by grace (favor), if

* If repentance rendered a man innocent, he could justly claim to be so treated, but nothing is clearer than that it does not. The readings of conscience are, that guilt remains after repentance. Compunction, which is the inward sting of guilt, continues after repentance, and has sometimes been so intense as to drive men into the confession of secret crimes, that they might suffer the penalty. Repentance does not change compunction into simple sorrow, but the self-blame continues, and punishment is accepted as just. Zaccheus makes restitution with a penal overplus. This pain of conscience, which repentance does not dispel, casts its shadow on eternity and begets the apprehension of punishment at the hands of a righteous God; and it is this

at all. But can God be the loving Being that he is and not pardon the penitent? Certainly not; but this transfers pardon from justice to love; and love will pardon the sinner at just such time and on just such conditions as shall be seen, in accordance with divine wisdom, to be for his own best welfare and that of others concerned. But this matter of *best welfare* opens up a large question for consideration, which may, or may not, result in the pardoning of the sinner on his mere repentance.*

Let it now be noted that the repentance, as the offense had done before it, has called into action several faculties of the injured party's mind, and that the same faculties are affected in both cases, and in the same order. The wrong act had first called forth anger, but this was curtailed, and subordinated to love; then this complex feeling called the intellect into action to decide what was best, and then the will decided to do that best thing. The repentance appeals also first to the feeling of anger, and quiets the emotion. As the anger, if it had not been subordinated to another feeling, would have issued directly in revenge, so this remission of anger would, if operating alone, result in the immediate reinstatement of

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that lies behind the efforts at expiation in all ages, which consist in some kind of self-inflicted penalty, vicarious or personal. Whether a righteous God can, if he will, excuse the sinner without some atoning act, I do not propose to consider. Certain it is that the penitent has no *just claim* to remission.

* There are many cases in our human relations which may seem to call for postponement. It may often be deemed best to await the penitent's acknowledgment of his wrong and profession of repentance (Lk. xvii. 4). If the wrong consist in an act of theft, the return of the stolen property may be first demanded. A parent may require a child to forgive some one else as a condition of his own forgiveness, as God requires us to forgive if we would be forgiven (Mt. vi. 14, 15). Other conditions may be made necessary by the nature of cases which may arise.

the offender. But love steps in, as before, and asks if it is best. Here an exercise of the understanding is called for, and after this, the will must act on its report. The mind must say to itself, I will do this. *In view of all the considerations I will release him.* Not till then has the injured party disposed of the matter in his own mind. It is in this act of the will that the pardon lies, though some of the changes which it involves have already taken place. If it shall appear that, in justice to others, or out of regard to the offender's own welfare, the pardon should not be granted on his mere repentance without some further condition, the mind will await the fulfillment of this condition, and then, but not till then, will it say to itself, I now drop the matter. Not till now does the mental act of pardon take place. Not till now does the mind, with the full consent of all its faculties, decide the offender's release.*

What, now, let us ask, will be the effect, respectively, of this change of feeling and this act of will on the relations and destiny of the wrong-doer?

A man has committed an atrocious murder. The trial clearly establishes his guilt and shows that he was perfectly sane in the act. The indignation of the community is so great that, were it not for their respect for law, they would rise and execute summary vengeance. The prisoner is sentenced to execution at an appointed date. But the keepers soon discover a change in his mental state, and after a time become fully convinced that he has sincerely repented of his

* Another mental act, transitive in the social sense, will take place when, in some form of *expression*, release is bestowed upon the offender. This is also called pardon. It is pardon, not simply as mental decision, but as bestowal, and is the sense in which the word is more commonly understood.

crime. This knowledge reaches the governor and he also believes in the man's repentance, and immediately his feelings toward him are changed. Should he have occasion to visit the prison and meet the condemned, he would speak very kindly to him, and his tone and manner would indicate his sympathy. He would also be glad to do him any favor, or give him any help that would be consistent with his duty as chief magistrate of the state; but it is safe to say that he will not pardon him,—that even mentally he has not pronounced his release,—and in leaving the penalty to take its course he will feel that he is doing him no injustice. If repentance had rendered the man innocent, it would be a crime for the governor to let the penalty stand; but, though, out of sympathy, he may commute the sentence, he will feel that he is doing right in not releasing the man. Pardon would save the prisoner's life and restore him to citizenship, *i. e.*, to his former relations; but let it be noted that the governor's change of feeling toward him does neither of these things, and let it be still further noted that his proceeding will be considered by all mankind as *just.** The change of feeling which naturally follows the knowledge of the offender's repentance does have some effect on the governor's bearing toward him, but it does not change his relations nor remove the penalty. These things hinge on the act of will which constitutes the mind's final disposal of the case, and the conscience of the race has pronounced that it should be so.

Let us pass now to inquire how far the teachings of

* Even in cases where a civil governor feels that he would be justified in pardoning an offender, it is not the change of feeling toward him, but the act of will releasing him, that decides his destiny.

the New Testament regarding remission of sins correspond with the principles just set forth.

Judging the Divine Being by our own mental constitution, we must suppose that his state of feeling toward the sinner is changed when the sinner repents. Is this change of feeling immediately followed by an act of the will pardoning the sinner and admitting him into the full relation of sonship? We are able to say positively that it is not. When the apostles went forth to preach the gospel, they proclaimed two conditions of divine acceptance—"repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Here we have a condition superadded to repentance, and its effect was to shut out many persons. Wherever the apostles went they were wont to offer the promises of the gospel, first to the Jewish people, and then to the Gentile, in every city. If repentance had been the only condition of remission of sins, they should have preached repentance to these Jewish brethren, seeking to lead them to a more faithful service of the God they professed to worship, and telling them that *on this condition* they should receive remission of sins; and then they should have tried to persuade as many as possible to believe in Christ, but should never have rejected them for not doing so. The fact is, they *never* pursued this course—never made remission of sins hinge on mere repentance, but on the superadded condition of believing what they said regarding Christ, and complete commitment to him. It cannot be said that there could be no true repentance which did not involve faith in Christ, for there were quite other difficulties to this belief than obliquity of heart. Thomas was not a bad man, but he refused to believe without ocular demonstration.

There is reason to believe that the powerful preaching of the apostles might have moved many of the Jewish people to repentance toward God who were not ready to believe their report regarding Jesus; and if this would have secured to them divine pardon and acceptance, they should have done so, and left the matter of faith in Christ to the fortunes of later teaching. Instead of this, they made this added requirement the decisive determinant of their acceptance or rejection. How can we explain this striking fact? To suppose that there was no good reason, and that God interposed an unnecessary condition to his acceptance of the sinner, were to impeach his goodness. Do the Scriptures make known any sufficient reason for this proceeding?

Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans (v. 15 *sq.*) describes the case of a man who has come to hate sin and is earnestly striving to overcome it,—the very condition which repentance is designed to bring about,—but finds it impossible to do so alone. He finds that when he would do good evil is present with him; so that what he hates that he does, and what he would do he cannot. Then, comparing sin to a corpse which is chained to him, he cries out in despair, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" The answer is, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The situation is, that a man who sincerely repents and undertakes to live a righteous life in his own strength is really not saved, but lost. With the man who has repented it is no longer perversity, but weakness; but the result is not less certain. He does not want to do wrong, but cannot help it.

Christ teaches the same truth under another figure

when he represents himself as a "vine" in which his disciples are the "branches." "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (Jn. xv. 5, 6). This appears strongly also in the very purpose and nature of Christianity itself. It is pre-eminently, not a government, but a system of *salvation*. The people of Israel lived under a divine government before Christ came; and as a system of government the New Testament writers find no fault with the Jewish law. Paul's argument in Romans was not that the Jewish law was defective as a system of government, but that no legal system could meet the requirements of the case. The law was not lacking in elaborate provisions for pardon; and during its administration the nation was visited frequently by men of mighty moral earnestness, who with commanding eloquence called the people to repentance, the last of these being John the Baptist, who moved the nation as by storm. What better than this could be desired? Nothing, if righteous government, together with ample provision for producing repentance, were sufficient. Yet it is all swept away and replaced by what is far less a government than a system of salvation. This is because repentance is not sufficient. The man who undertakes to live a righteous life *cannot do it;* and the penitent is still lost unless he takes a strong hand that can help him. Hence faith, which binds the man to Christ the Savior, is necessary. And God does not pardon the sinner on his mere repentance, because his release at this point could not be of the slightest benefit to him

—nay, it would do him great harm by leading him to think that all is well when he is still lost.* Love will not do this; and it is love that pardons. If God be in earnest about the sinner's salvation, he will not, by a misplaced pardon, mislead him to his ruin. He therefore requires that the sinner shall not only repent, but embrace Christianity, which is God's hand reached down to save him.

But Christianity is not a single force; it embraces two mighty saving forces—Christ, and his earthly body, the church. Each has its own necessary use in making righteousness practicable. The author of *Ecce Homo* profoundly says that "without a society, and an authority of some kind, morality remains speculative and useless."† If this is true, it needs no argument to show how vast the importance of church membership is in making a righteous life practicable. Observation conducts to the same conclusion. We need but look about us to see that every man is saved or ruined by society. To stand apart from all connection with Christ's spiritual body on earth and live wholly in the society of the world is to invite spiritual ruin. It is the church that finds man in his sin, breaks his stony heart with her pleading voice, and brings him a penitent to the feet of Christ; and it is she that must still attend him, or he is almost sure to be lost. If Christ be one of the mighty arms which save men, and the church the other,

*Even Judaism was not without its helping influence to live a righteous life, which, in addition to his repentance, the Jew was required to make use of as a condition of the divine favor; but, as these were far inferior to those of Christianity, they gave place to the new.

†*Ecce Homo*, Preface Supplementary, p. ix. His argument on this point is conclusive.

why count him saved when he has taken one of these and not the other? If God refuses to pardon men on their mere repentance, and until they shall make their salvation practicable by laying hold on his saving forces, why pardon them when they have but half done this? The truth is, union with Christ and union with the church rest on precisely the same rational basis. They are both *practical* conditions of salvation. Neither one is a change of heart, which takes place in repentance and precedes them both. But union with the church cannot take place by a mere act of the mind. It can be consummated only by some external act; and that act is, by divine appointment, Christian baptism. Thus baptism becomes a condition of pardon because it is the act by which we form a connection with one, yea, both, of the two great saving forces of Christianity. *Baptism for the remission of sins and justification by faith in Christ rest on the same rational basis.* Any course of argument which will exclude the one will undermine the other. A man, after he has repented, must lay hold on Christ before he will be pardoned, because he needs this strong helping power to make his repentance effectual; and he must lay hold on the church for the same reason. Repentance is the *ethical* condition of salvation; connection with Christ and his church are *practical* conditions. In repentance a change of feeling and purpose with regard to righteousness takes place; in faith and baptism connection is made with the strong forces that render righteousness attainable.* If the con-

*When it is said that entering into union with Christ is a practical, not a moral, condition of remission, it is not meant that surrender to and laying hold on Christ is not a moral and spiritual

dition of pardon must be solely ethical, it will exclude baptism, but with it faith in Christ must also go. If faith in Christ may be admitted among the conditions of pardon, for a similar reason baptism may also be admitted. In cases where men are already believers in the truth of Christianity before they repent, repentance and faith in Christ are brought so close together that we are wont to regard them as practically one act. This tends to confuse in our minds the real bearings of the case; for in the apostolic age "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" were often separated, and they are now whenever we are preaching to pious Jews, or to skeptics who are earnestly seeking to do right without being satisfied of the truth of the gospel. In all such cases we exact faith in Christ as a condition of remission of sins. That is, we exact more than the ethical condition, which is repentance, or a right-seeking state of the heart. As distinguished from repentance, faith in Christ is a practical condition of salvation and stands on a level with baptism as a connective to saving forces. If baptism were a mere ceremony or external act it, of course, could have no rightful place as a condition of pardon; but if it be what we have shown it to be, and what it evidently was in the apostolic age, there is no more reason for its

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act, but that it is an *act*, not a *change of mental state*. The moral *change* takes place in repentance and then may be followed by any number of moral *acts*. The spiritual act of the soul in entering into union with Christ is profoundly moral, but its ethical elements had their origin in repentance. The *change* that takes place in repentance is ethical; the *change* that takes place in entering into union with Christ is practical. It is one which renders the fulfillment of the purpose of repentance possible. It puts the soul in connection with a fountain of strength. It is a vital change of relation.

exclusion from the conditions of pardon than there is for the exclusion of faith in Christ.

If the conditions of remission embrace both ethical and practical steps, it remains to inquire what is the status of the person who has taken the ethical step, but has not yet taken the practical. We have a complete answer to this question in the case of Cornelius. He was earnestly striving to do his duty to both God and man. His moral state was such as repentance is designed to produce; and in the commencement of this course there must have been the essential elements of repentance.* God's attitude toward him was also what we should expect. There is no mark of displeasure, but, on the contrary, approval; and his prayers and alms rise as a memorial before God. But, nothwithstanding these things, the narrative clearly informs us that he was not *saved;* for he was told to send for Peter who should tell him words whereby he and his house should be saved (Acts xi. 13, 14). We also discover that he had not received the remission of sins, for Peter tells him that "through his [Christ's] name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins"—a step which Cornelius had not yet taken. Thus it appears that while the divine feeling toward this man had changed, and the divine behavior in certain respects had also changed, he was not yet pardoned or saved.

*The fact that the conversion of the Gentiles to Christ is spoken of as a "repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18) does not imply that there had been no previous repentance. Cornelius had repented "toward God," and what remained in his becoming a Christian is loosely spoken of as a repentance unto life—unto the life that Christ offers in his kingdom. The repentance toward God had been both moral and loyal; this was devotement to Christ with all that it involves.

This case presents insurmountable difficulties if we are to make remission of sins dependent only on ethical conditions, but, if it depends not only on a man's change of attitude toward righteousness and toward God, but also on his laying hold on the strong forces which God has ordained for his rescue from sin, all difficulties vanish and every feature of the case becomes what we should expect it to be.

But there is one further point that is specially worthy of our attention. As already noted, Cornelius has reached that state where God has ceased to be displeased with him and views him with approval, but he has not been "saved" and has not received the "remission of sins." We discover, therefore, that that change of feeling in the divine Mind which follows the sinner's repentance *is not what the Scriptures mean by "remission of sins"; but what they do mean by it is that release and acceptance* which God grants to the man who has not only repented, but put himself into actual connection with the saving forces of Christianity.* Now, if this is so—if such is the meaning of remission—and if baptism is the step by which we enter into connection with one † of the mightiest of these forces (the church), there remains no longer any shadow of reason why baptism should not be a condition of remission of sins. From much that is popularly

* With this are connected adoption to sonship (Gal. iii. 26, 27 and iv. 5, 6), union with Christ (Rom. vi. 5), the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts ii. 38), and admission into the church (1. Cor. xii. 13).

† I say *one* of these forces, because we are here considering what is philosophically necessary. It is *impossible* to unite with the church without some act of profession; it would be possible to unite with Christ, if he had so ordained, by a simply spiritual act. In reality, we enter into union with Christ and with the church by the same act, baptism.

said on the subject it seems evident that, when speaking of remission of sins, many are thinking of the change of feeling in the divine Mind toward the sinner; but this cannot fitly be called either pardon or remission. The act of *will* which in view of all the circumstances, including the sinner's own welfare, pronounces his release is the real pardoning act: and it is just this that the Scriptures, with utmost fitness, call remission. People may say what they choose regarding remission,—meaning by it God's change of feeling toward the sinner,—but when they attempt to foist this meaning into the Scriptures and then explain away some of their clearest statements to reconcile them with this assumed definition, they commit a grave error. The very fact that God's approving attitude toward Cornelius seems inconsistent with the fact that his sins had not been remitted, should give us pause. Remission of sins does *not* mean remission of divine anger, and baptism, on the other hand, is *not* a mere outward act. When remission of sins is understood to mean love's release of the sinner at that point where it is *best* that it be done, and baptism the high and holy spiritual step of *entering into union with Christ and his church*, this controversy will cease forever. God is not angry with the penitent sinner, but he is lost until he lays hold on the saving forces, and should not be counted *saved* until he does so. Remission of sins depends not simply on an ethical condition, but also on practical conditions; hence not only repentance, but union with Christ and his church are necessary.

That God should require some practical condition beyond mere repentance in order to remission of sins is not an exceptional procedure confined to conversion

alone, but is true of the entire Christian life. Not repentance alone, but repentance with *confession of our sins to God*, is made the condition of our later forgiveness. John says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1. Jn. i. 9). We are also taught in the Lord's Prayer to *pray* for forgiveness. Neither confession nor prayer is necessary to inform God of the state of our hearts; yet forgiveness waits on their performance. Thus, forgiveness in the Christian life depends not alone on the ethical condition of repentance, but also on a subsequent practical condition. If God granted all his blessings immediately, in accordance with the state of the heart, or on that simple condition, it would render all petitionary prayer farcical, since whatever was prayed for would already have been granted, or assured. If you see your child at table about to ask for some article of food, and you anticipate his utterance by helping him to it, he will not ask for it. The principle which would rule out baptism as a condition of remission of sins—making remission depend alone on the state of the heart—would sweep petitionary prayer out of existence. And let it be further observed that the Christian's prayer for forgiveness is a *profession* of his sinfulness, and that the baptism of the convert is a *prayer* for forgiveness. "It is," says Prof. Stevens, "the request (directed) towards God for a good conscience." (1. Pet. iii. 21.)* Baptism is the prayer of the soul for a clear record, for absolution. Forgiveness, in the Christian life, is made dependent on *prayer which embraces confession*, and with the convert on *profes-*

* *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 310.

sion which embraces prayer. It is prayer united with profession or confession in both cases. Baptism as a condition of the remission of sins is in perfect accord with the law of forgiveness in the Christian life. In one case as in the other, there must be an *act* superadded to the state of the heart.

The extreme ethicalism of our time, which refuses to recognize any practical conditions of remission, will not stop at the casting out of baptism, but will tend to sweep away all positive religion. And this tendency is already at work to no small extent.

BOOK II.

THE NATURE OF JUSTIFYING FAITH AND ITS RELATION TO BAPTISM

PART I.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL EXAMINATION

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

JUSTIFICATION by faith is the great doctrine of Protestantism. The spirituality, the moral uplift, and the strong individualism of Protestantism, are mainly due to the influence of this great doctrine. Explain it as one may, its atmosphere is a soul-tonic, and there is in it so much of moral health as to point to a deeper meaning than that of a mere arbitrary method of reaching reconciliation with God.

Salvation by faith is also one of the cardinal doctrines of primitive Christianity. Salvation by grace and salvation by faith rise like twin mountains in the area of Christian teaching. They are two mighty suns ruling in the heavens of divine revelation, about which circle all other truths. Grace (the divine giving) and faith (the human taking) form the highest generalization of Christianity. No system can represent the gospel fairly which is not true to the overshadowing prominence of these doctrines.

§ *1. Some Preliminary Considerations.*

It is the purpose of the present investigation to determine the relation of Baptism to justification by faith. In order to do this, it will be necessary first to inquire what is meant by the term *faith*. In approaching this question, however, it is important

that we guard against certain assumptions which would vitiate our whole examination:

1. It will not do for us, in advance, to fix upon a certain definition of the word *faith* and its corresponding term *believe*, and seek to apply this to all cases where these words occur in the New Testament. This would simply be to read our own preconceptions into the Scriptures, and could have no value beyond that of exhibiting our ingenuity.

2. Having determined the meaning of the word *faith* (or *believe*) in any passage of Scripture, we must not assume that it has exactly that meaning in all other places where it is found. This would, no doubt, be a very convenient method of interpretation, but it would ignore one of the fundamental facts of language, and be as misleading as convenient. To commit this blunder at the outset would be to shut the door in advance against all reliable results. Such an assumption would fatally disqualify us for any trustworthy investigation.

The fact of language to which I refer is well set forth by Sir William Hamilton in his *Lectures on Logic*. Speaking of the ambiguity of language as a source of error in reasoning, he says:

"As this is the principal source of error originating in language, it will be proper to be a little more explicit. And here it is expedient to take into account two circumstances, which mutually affect each other. The first is, that as the vocabulary of every language is necessarily finite, it is necessarily disproportioned to the multiplicity, not to say infinity, of thought; and the second, that the complement of words in any given language has been always filled up with terms significant of objects and relations of the external

world, before the want was experienced of words to express the objects and relations of the internal.

"From the first of these circumstances, considered exclusively and by itself, it is manifest that one of two alternatives must take place. Either the words of a language must each designate only a single notion, —a single fasciculus of thought,—the multitude of notions not designated being allowed to perish, never obtaining more than a momentary existence in the mind of the individual; or the words of a language must each be employed to denote a plurality of concepts. In the former case, a small amount of thought would be expressed, but that precisely and without ambiguity; in the latter, a large amount of thought would be expressed, but that vaguely and equivocally. Of these alternatives (each of which has thus its advantages and disadvantages) the latter is the one which has universally been preferred; and accordingly, all languages by the same word express a multitude of thoughts, more or less differing from each other. Now, what is the consequence of this? It is plain that if a word has more than a single meaning attached to it, when it is employed it cannot of itself directly and peremptorily suggest any definite thought;—all that it can do is vaguely and hypothetically to suggest a variety of different notions; and we are obliged from a consideration of the context,—of the tenor,—of the analogy, of the discourse, to surmise, with greater or less assurance, with greater or less precision, what particular bundle of characters it was intended to convey."*

In dealing with words, therefore, we do not have to do with certain fixed quantities whose values never

Lectures on Logic, p. 436, *sq.*

vary, but with signs whose meanings shift with the ever-changing positions, or connections, in which they stand. It has been asserted that the word *good* has no less than forty different meanings, or shades of meaning. Prof. Whitney says that "it is the customary office of a word to cover not a point, but a territory that is irregular, heterogeneous, and variable"; and again: "If we were to count in our words only those degrees of difference of meaning for which in other cases separate provision of expression is made, the 100,000 English words would doubtless be found equivalent to a million or two."*

Under such circumstances, both the expression of thought and the interpretation of such expression would at first seem to be a matter so tedious and uncertain as to render it well-nigh impracticable; but Sir William Hamilton further says:

"In this procedure what is chiefly wonderful, is the rapidity with which the mind compares the word with its correlations, and in general, without the slightest effort, decides which among its various meanings is the one which it is here intended to convey. But how marvelous soever be the ease and velocity of this process of selection, it cannot always be performed with equal certainty. Words are often employed with a plurality of meanings: several of which may quadrate, or be supposed to quadrate, with the general tenor of the discourse. Error is thus possible; and it is also probable, if we have any prepossession in favor of one interpretation rather than of another. So copious a source of error is the ambiguity of language, that a very large proportion of human controversy

**Life and Growth of Language*, by Wm. D. Whitney, p. 111.

has been concerning the sense in which certain terms should be understood; and many disputes have even been fiercely waged, in consequence of the disputants being unaware that they agreed in opinion, and only differed in the meaning they attached to the words in which that opinion was expressed."

If mistakes in gathering the meaning of words from their correlations prove so fertile a source of error, what must be said of any method of interpretation which does not even attempt to do this—which ignores the whole process and fails to apply the principles by which, in common speech, the meanings of words are determined?

The word *faith* has several meanings, so has also the word *believe;* and the same is true of the original Greek words of which these are translations. It is antecedently probable that we shall find these words used in many, if not all, of their various senses in the Scriptures; and the exact meaning of either of them, in any particular passage, must be determined by its correlations, or the conditions under which the act takes place. To assume the contrary would be to render any investigation of this subject worthless.

3. The application of the linguistic principles by which the various meanings of words are determined may show that the word *faith* and its corresponding term *believe* are sometimes, or prevailingly, used in a sense, or senses, in the New Testament, which they do not bear in ordinary literature. To *assume* this to be so, would be wholly unwarrantable; yet, no more so than to assume the contrary. We may say in advance that there is no antecedent improbability against it. Every new thing and every new conception must have a name. In the growth of modern

science we draw extensively for terms from the two great classical languages, Greek and Latin. But the most common course, in the history of ideas, has been to express new conceptions by a modification or extension of meaning of terms already in current use; and such has been the method of the inspired writers. Christianity rose upon the world like a new creation, and it has glorified not a few of the words which represent its cardinal thoughts. The words *life*, *death*, *cross*, *Christ*, *repentance*,* and a number of others, have taken on new meanings in Scripture usage; and it is not improbable that so important a word as *faith*, in the Christian system, will also be found to have been subject to the same influence. But we must *assume* nothing on this point. Whether or not *faith* is ever used in the Scriptures in any special sense, and, if so, what that sense is, must be determined by the application of linguistic laws.

§2. *One of the Uses of the Word "Believe."*

With these preliminary considerations we are now prepared to enter upon the question of the meaning, or meanings, of the word *faith*. It is not my present purpose to do this exhaustively, but only to note such uses of the word as bear upon the question under consideration. Let us, then, proceed to notice one of its meanings.

When the apostles went forth preaching the gospel to the world, their first task was to establish the

* "In classical usage, *metanoeo* never denotes a change of moral bearing, or of the manner of life in general, but always refers to some particular points of behavior." *Cremer's Biblico Theological Lexicon, sub voce.*

That is, the word *repentance* in classical usage has no profound moral meaning. What a vast change passes over it in its introduction into Christian usage!

divinity and Messiahship of Jesus. This they did by presenting evidence addressed to the understanding. Those who were convinced by this evidence were said to have *believed* this truth. The Samaritans (Acts viii. 12) are said to have "believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." I see nothing to indicate that the word "believed" here means anything more than the crediting of Philip's preaching as true. We have here a conviction of the understanding regarding certain truths. The *person* believed is Philip, and the *thing* believed is his preaching. This, then, —one of the most common uses of the word *believe* in all literature,—is at least *one* of its uses in the New Testament. There would be no impropriety in speaking of this *believing* as *belief*, or *faith*. The word *faith* is the translation of simply the nounal form of the word translated *believe*. The two words *belief* and *faith* are represented by only one word in the Greek. Had the Greek possessed two words corresponding respectively to our words *faith* and *belief*, they would probably have been used distinctively; but as it is, one word covers the whole ground, and that word is simply the nounal form of the word rendered *believe*. I believe that that act of believing, of which we are now speaking, is more accurately designated by the word *belief* than by the word *faith*, and that we shall avoid unnecessary ambiguity by so designating it. The English language is richer at this point than the Greek, and we may as well possess ourselves of the advantage. What, then, let us proceed to inquire, is the nature of this belief?

Let it be said in the first place that it possesses *no proper moral element*. It is a matter of the under-

standing. The belief that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God," reached by simply weighing the evidence presented, may be no more a moral act than reaching the conclusion, through a similar process, that Julius Cæsar was assassinated. True, a man may apply himself to this investigation with high and moral motives, and these may have something to do in determining the conclusion he shall reach, but not necessarily or always so. The object in listening to the gospel may have, and in a large proportion of cases does have, no higher motive than curiosity. This great truth may even take possession of the understanding, while the mind is engaged only in resistance to its acceptance. In our day multitudes believe it from their childhood, just as they hold other inherited beliefs, and with as little moral purpose; while, at the same time, they may be living godless or even wicked lives. To save a man on such a faith would be to save him entirely regardless of moral character.

This conviction of the understanding may be attended by various emotions. The affections may be touched, or the truth may cause alarm, and rouse the conscience to compunction, as it did on the day of Pentecost. In this we have something of a moral quickening. But all this may take place without ever leading to repentance. The love of the sinful life may be so strong as to resist these impulses, and the belief may prove abortive. When it is successful, its value lies in its *causative* power—its power to work repentance. Apart from this, it becomes a savor of death, by leaving the heart more obdurate than before.

Such a belief, which may leave a man still in a state

of rebellion against God, is not the faith that is said to be "counted for righteousness." To count this for righteousness would be to count a man righteous without repentance, and while still clinging to his sin. If it be claimed that this belief is not counted for righteousness until it issues in repentance and submission to God—in other words, that it is not *faith* that is so counted, but faith plus repentance and submission, steps far more vital than the belief itself,—I reply that the faith that was counted to Abraham for righteousness was so counted without waiting for it to be followed by repentance, and that it is not represented as being followed by repentance at all in his case. It was *faith*, not faith plus repentance, that was counted to Abraham for righteousness. Abraham's faith was very different from the belief we are now considering, and contained within itself all the spiritual elements necessary to acceptance with God. If we shall compare the sinner's state of mind at this point with that of Abraham when his faith was counted for righteousness, we shall discover a vast difference. They belong to different epochs in human experience. Abraham was not then considering the question whether he should repent and submit to God, and his faith at that time had a very different content from the belief which we are now considering, as we shall soon see.

If the motives brought to bear upon the heart through this conviction of the understanding prove powerful enough to break the attachment to sin, we shall have *repentance*, which consists in a resolution springing from sorrow for sin, to abandon the sinful life and enter upon the service of God. This change is a vastly important one and is, moreover, of a moral

character; but the penitent has not yet reached that faith which is said to be counted for righteousness. What, then, is this faith?

This we are now prepared to consider.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE OF JUSTIFYING FAITH.

The Apostle Paul was the first to discuss the question of the relation of faith to salvation; and, in his great argument on justification, we shall find much information regarding the nature of that faith which forms the condition of the divine acceptance.

In this argument, which will be found chiefly in the Roman and Galatian Epistles, he undertakes to prove that men are justified by faith, rather than by the legal observance of the Jewish law, and adduces the fact that Abraham, the ancestral head of the Jewish race, to whom the promises were made which constituted the very hope of Israel, was justified by faith, and not by the law, which came hundreds of years later. The demonstration, therefore, is complete that faith, not the works of the law, constitutes the true condition of justification. But let it be observed that this conclusion depends wholly on the fact that Abraham was justified by faith. In view of this, the argument is worthless regarding any other kind of faith than that by which Abraham was justified. Take any essential element out of that faith, and the whole argument will fall to the ground. It is of *this* faith, and nothing less, that it is said that "it was counted for righteousness." What, then, was the nature of this faith?

§ *1. Abraham's Faith was Trust.*

Abraham was called of God to leave his country and kindred, and go out into a strange land, which—after his arrival there—God promised to give to his

seed for an inheritance. He had also promised him a numerous posterity, and declared that he would make him a great nation, and that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

Abraham obeyed, going to the land, and wandering as a stranger there. Time passed, and he had no natural heir, and, by the laws of nature, could expect none. His faith in God was not shaken, but he seems no longer to have expected the promise to be fulfilled in his own person; and this was a source of great sorrow to him.

In this situation, God appeared to him, and announced a literal fulfillment of his promise, and gave him many definite particulars regarding it. In face of all the seeming impossibilities involved, we are told that Abraham "believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. xv. 6). What does this language mean?

The original word translated "believed," in this passage, is given by one of the authors in Lange's *Commentary* as "embracing and steadfastly resting upon"; and another says: "The word 'believed' is here exact, or precise; he cleaves to the Lord (precisely: he stays, supports, rests himself upon the Lord)." This is clearly a description of *trust*. Thayer's N. T. *Lexicon* defines the Greek word translated "believed," in all the New Testament references to Abraham's faith, as "*to trust*."* Paul himself speaks of it as *hope* (Rom. iv. 18), which never is a mere matter of the understanding. But we are not

*In the Supplement to Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek* the author says regarding faith that "with Paul the element of unreserved trust occupies the first place, with the signification 'unreservedly, without demur of word or act, to give oneself up to the God of our salvation'."

dependent on verbal criticism alone, nor even on Paul's description, for determining the character of Abraham's faith. It included the laying hold on a promise which embraced the great desire of his life. Thus it was a reliance of the heart on God for the bestowment of a great blessing; it was a strong, unwavering *trust*. Abraham's faith was a *personal trust*—trust, in a matter deeply concerning his own personal interests.

The faith, then, that was counted to Abraham for righteousness was *personal trust;* and Paul argues that such a trust in God revealed in Christ will be counted for righteousness in every age.

The act of counting this faith for righteousness is called *justification*. This justification may be said to be a forensic act. It is not a *making* righteous (it was not so with Abraham), but a *pronouncing* righteous. In courts of law the act of acquittal, or pronouncing not guilty, takes place simply on the ascertainment of the fact of the innocence of the accused. But as all men have sinned, God can pronounce no such justification on them. If, in view of any condition he acquits them, it must be as an act of favor, or *grace;* and his pronouncing them just, or free from condemnation, must involve *pardon*, to which it is practically equivalent.*

*It is not claimed that the words *justification* and *pardon* have precisely the same meaning. The one is the act of a Judge; the other, that of a Sovereign. The one implies that the law is *satisfied;* the other, that it is *relaxed*. The man who is justified is entitled to all the privileges of a righteous man. These terms, however, are used to designate the same transaction viewed from different standpoints, and may be taken as practically equivalent. In Rom. iv. 7, 8, Paul uses *forgiveness* and the *non-imputation* of sin as equivalent to *justification*, while faith is, in Rom. iv. 5, the condition of *justification*, and in Acts x. 43, of *remission of sins*.

Trust, the word used to designate the condition on which pardon is granted, does not, in its ordinary meaning, represent a *moral*, or even a *loyal*, act. The merchant's trust of a customer until he is able to pay, is simply a business affair. It involves no loyalty to any one; and, so far from its being moral, the merchant may be a very immoral man.

If this be all there is in justification by faith, it is certainly very disappointing to our moral instincts, and ill accords with our ideas of God as a righteous Being. Various expedients have been resorted to to relieve this difficulty. It has been held that justification is not a *pronouncing* just, but a *making* just; but the language will not bear this construction. It has been held that faith is but one of the conditions of justification, and that through subsequent repentance and obedience it is rendered fit to be counted for righteousness; but Paul speaks only of this one condition throughout the argument, and rests his conclusion on a case in the life of Abraham in which faith was not followed by repentance, and in which the counting for righteousness did not wait for any other condition.*

Had he been arguing that it is faith *plus* some subsequent act that is counted for righteousness, the case of the offering of Isaac would have been far more to the point; and, as it occurred hundreds of years before the giving of the Jewish law, it would have served equally well in excluding that law as a ground of justification. Here Abraham's faith passed into an act of obedience, and received the warmest divine approval,

*Paul founds his argument on that incident in the life of Abraham recorded in the 15th chap. of Genesis, and not on that relating to his call (Gen. xii.), nor that relating to the offering of Isaac (Gen. xxii.).

and was, as James says, "counted for righteousness." Yet Paul does not choose this case, but, on the contrary, selects one in which the counting for righteousness was in view of a mental act of *trust*. If faith must be followed by other conditions, such as repentance and submission, Paul certainly was very infelicitous both in the wording of his argument and in the selection of his typical example.

Another method of relieving the difficulty in question is that of giving to faith a high moral and spiritual content; but, if there be no other reason for this than to escape a difficulty, we shall hardly be warranted in doing so.

§ 2. *The Nature of the Faith that is Reckoned for Righteousness.*

Let us now proceed to examine the trust which stands at the threshold of the Christian life on its own merits, without resort to special pleading, and regardless of any difficulties which may be involved. This faith is a *fact* in human experience. What is its nature?

Let it be said, in the first place, that it is not a mere *spontaneous* trust, but rather a trust *involving an act of the will*. It is necessarily so, from the very fact that it is made a condition of justification. A man cannot trust in Christ as his Savior until he fulfills the condition that makes Christ his Savior. Thus, the very fact of making trust a condition seems at first thought to involve an impossibility. Christ *is not* a man's Savior till he trusts Him as such, and he cannot trust Him as such until he *becomes* his savior. How, then, can such a trust ever come into existence? How can anything come into existence, whose existence is the antecedent condition of that very existence? There is

no escape from this difficulty unless trust shall take into itself an element of *will*. This will best appear from two illustrations:

A father tells his child that at Christmas time he will make him a beautiful present. No condition is expressed. There is, therefore, nothing for the child to decide—nothing before its *will*. It knows of its father's truthfulness, love, and ability to perform what he has promised; and it involuntarily—spontaneously—trusts him for it, looking forward to the fulfillment with glad expectancy. Its trust is *spontaneous*. But let us suppose another case: A man is very ill and has been given up by his physician, to die. A few hours after this announcement, a friend enters the sick room, accompanied by a distinguished specialist, advances to the bedside, and says: "I could not see you die without summoning this doctor to see you. Please let him examine your case; and then, if you do not wish to employ him, no harm will be done." The physician approaches, and, after making a careful examination, says: "My friend, you are a very sick man, but if you will intrust your case to me, I can save your life." There is instantly a question before the mind of the sick man for decision. He is not *now trusting* the physician to save his life. If he decides not to accept his services, he will never so trust him. When, by an act of *will*, he accepts him, he immediately begins to trust him—to rely upon him for such service. He *cannot* do so without this intervening act of the will. Without this act of acceptance, this specialist will never be his physician, and he can trust him for no such service.

No man can trust in Christ as his Savior until Christ

becomes his Savior, and he does not become his Savior until the sinner *accepts* him as such.

It is proper, however, here to remark that trust may pass through two stages—the stage of *anticipation*, and the stage of *appropriation*. One may rely on Christ's *becoming* his Savior, and then, after he has become so, he may rely upon him *as* his Savior. Neither of these forms of trust can come into existence without an act of the will. No one can rely on Christ's *becoming* his Savior until he *decides* to accept him as such, and no one can rely on Christ *as* his Savior before he *does* so accept him. That it is the latter—the completed form of trust—which is counted for righteousness, I shall assume for the present, reserving the proof till a later date.

But let us here observe that we have discovered one very important fact regarding this faith, namely, that there can be no trust in Christ which does not begin in an act of the will accepting him. Spontaneous trust is made impossible by the very conditionality of justification. It will be of great importance to keep this before the mind, since the unconscious gliding from one conception to the other has been a cause of much confusion, and really lies at the foundation of many false ideas regarding faith. The trust that is counted for righteousness begins, and must begin, in an act of the *will*. *It has no existence prior to an act of the will accepting Christ.*

But while we have learned this much regarding this faith, we have yet discovered nothing which shows it to be either a *moral* or a *loyal* act. A gentleman offers to hand a lady from a carriage; she accepts his service and trusts herself to him, relying on his strength, ability, and intention to perform the service

properly. Here we have *trust* beginning in *acceptance*, but the lady's act possesses no moral quality; nor does it involve any loyalty to the gentleman.

If the accepting trust in Christ be nothing higher than this, the disappointment of our moral nature must remain, and justification by faith must seem little less than trifling with a grave and serious subject.

Is the trust, then, that is "counted for righteousness" anything higher than the ordinary trust of business and social life, which possesses no moral, loyal, or spiritual element? It is. How do we know this?

Before answering, let us say that most minds instinctively feel that it *is* so. They recognize it at a glance. They simply *see* more in the word than that. They reach the conclusion through a lightning-like flash of intelligence, which they may not be able fully to explain. They are conscious of something in the situation, or in the subject—vaguely seen—that sheds a new glory of meaning on the word. The mind is correct in this intuition: and it is only necessary, for purposes of argument, to draw out this shadowy perception into clear apprehension, and follow the process of word-glorification in its successive stages.

We have here simply to do with a fundamental law of language, and in a case that is paralleled by thousands of similar ones in every tongue. Definitely stated, it is this: *When the action of a verb terminates on an object, or takes place under conditions, whose nature is such as to make part of the meaning of the verb inapplicable, the verb loses such part of its meaning in that case; and, when the action of a verb terminates on an object, or takes place under conditions, whose nature requires a modification or increase of the ordinary meaning of the verb, it undergoes such modifica-*

tion or takes on such additional meaning. Mutatis mutandis, the law is applicable also to other parts of speech; and the correctness of the principle may be verified by referring to any work on the structure and growth of language. For our present purpose, a few illustrations will serve best.

To *love* a *sweetheart* and to love a *friend*, are not acts of precisely the same character. The love of David and Jonathan was not the love of the sexes, and could by no possibility be such, simply because they were both *men*—because of the nature of the object toward which the feeling was directed.

If, now, we apply love to another object—to an enemy—the change of meaning which the word undergoes amounts almost to a revolution. A large part of the meaning of *love* is instantly stricken out. The complacency, present in most of its other forms, and the affinity so prominent in friendship, are wholly eliminated, while another element of love rises into sublime prominence—an element which, in some of its other forms, is almost wholly absent. So vast is the difference between the meaning of the word in this case, and that which it possesses in most other cases, that many who can love passionately a member of the other sex, or a friend, are wholly incapable of loving an enemy.* This change of meaning all results from the character of the object toward which the feeling is directed.

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* So true is this, that some assert that it is impossible to love an enemy; that the best that can be done is to stifle resentment and treat the enemy *as if* we loved him. But this is neither Scriptural teaching nor good psychology. Absalom was David's enemy, yet David loved him with a yearning and passionate affection What is true of parental love can be shown to be true of at least one other kind of love—the Christian.

Let love terminate on still another object—God—and we shall have still a different meaning of the word. Here the change consists, not so much in the elimination of certain of its ordinary meanings, as in the addition of new ones. The word now embraces within its import both *gratitude* and *reverence*. Neither of these meanings belongs to the other three forms of love to which we have referred, and yet, when love is directed toward God, these qualities immediately spring into it—the *reverence* because of his character, and the *gratitude* because of his benefactions.

Let us take another example, the verb *to call on*. To call on a *waiter* is to summon him to service; to call on an *acquaintance* is to make a short visit; to call on *God* is to pray, or invoke his blessing. So of the word *fear*. To fear an enemy or a wild beast, is to be *afraid* of him; to fear God, is to *reverence* him. Thus words are like chameleons, changing their hue with the object on which they rest, and yet retaining an identity in change.

This list need not be extended. Such examples may be found on almost every page of any dictionary. We have in these cases an illustration of one of the fundamental laws of language. To strike this principle of modification out of language would be well-nigh to strike the human race dumb.

The mind usually reaches these new or modified meanings by a simple glance of intelligence, without reasoning them out; but should any one be disposed to deny that in loving a sweetheart the feeling is different from that exercised in loving an enemy or in loving God, we should be compelled to show, by careful examination of the conditions under which the

act takes place, that the feelings in these different cases can not possibly be the same.

This is what we must now do with respect to *trust*. Our task is to show that the object on which it terminates, or the conditions under which it takes place in conversion, make it impossible that it have simply the lower meaning of business life. We have, moreover, in these conditions, the means of showing not only what it *cannot* be, but *exactly what it is*, and of vindicating the flash of intuitive perception which sees in it a high and holy meaning.

Let us begin with the lowest meaning of the word, that we may build our definition up from the foundation.

Suppose we tell a man that if he will only accept Christ's redemptive work and intrust to him the task of procuring for him the remission of sins and an admission into the divine favor, the work shall be accomplished. The man replies that he would certainly rather enjoy the divine favor than rest under the divine condemnation, and that, as he has come to regard Jesus as a divine Being, he could trust him to procure that favor for him as easily as he could trust a faithful clerk with a matter of business. But there is something about the proposition that causes him to hesitate, and he finally asks this question: "Will anything else be required of me after this justification?" "O yes," we tell him, "just beyond this there stands a cross on which you are to be crucified; your present self is to be slain. The world-life, to which you cling so fondly, is to be abandoned. You are to take Christ as your master, and devote yourself to a life of holy consecration. You are to bear his cross, and this new life may bring you into many

troubles. You may meet with strong opposition and suffer the loss of every worldly good, and even be required to suffer martyrdom for Christ's sake."

It is plain that the man regards this as a very serious matter. He, however, says that he would like to ask us one further question: "Suppose I do not do these things, will my justification save me in the end?" "Oh, no," we tell him, "it is only those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor and immortality that shall inherit eternal life." And then we tell him of the judgment scene, described by Christ (Mt. xxv. 31-46), where the vast multitude who stand before the Judge are divided into two companies, the one upon the right and the other upon the left; and that, as soon as the Judge speaks, we learn that both companies are *believers*, and are equally *trusting* Christ for salvation, and that their acceptance or rejection depends on loyal, loving devotion to him, betraying itself in deeds of love to the humblest of his people; and that the vast company on the left, though they had trusted in him for salvation, are, for lack of this devotion, sent away into punishment.

The man is very serious and, after a period of silence, says: "I do not see that my justification would do me very much good, without a holy life to follow it."

Now, it will be impossible for this man to consider and decide this question of his justification, and shut out of view that which is to follow; and, in reaching his decision, the stress of motive will lie almost exclusively at this point. Although we presented the question to him without mentioning that which was to follow, he has been unwilling to decide it without

knowing all; and when he makes his decision, it will be in view of that *all*. If he is wedded to the worldly life, he will no more take the justification with the cross in sight, than a fish will take the bait with the hook in view. In vain do we spread the snare in the presence of the bird. And, even if this man should feel inclined to take such a useless justification, he would reflect that, by practicing such a deliberate imposition on Christ, he would but incur a deeper condemnation. He will have nothing of the justification until he is ready to accept the holy life; and when he accepts Christ, trusting in him for justification, *that act will contain within itself the mental acceptance of the life of consecration and obedience.* In other words, his acceptance of Christ will contain within itself both a *moral* and a *loyal* element: *moral* because accepting a life of righteousness, *loyal* because accepting a life of obedience.

When the act of trust falls on a being presenting a character like that of Christ, and making such demands, and presenting such alternatives, the trust instantly, and by a law of necessity, is transformed into a *moral*, *loyal* trust. It is of the very nature of the gospel to stir the moral nature to its profoundest depths; and it results from this that any normal response which the soul may make to it must be both moral and loyal.

That men will not accept Christ as an object of trust until they can do it morally and loyally, is forcibly declared by Christ himself in Jn. iii. 18, 19, where he says: "He that believeth on him [the Son] is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the con-

demnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." It is here declared that the man who is clinging to an evil life will not believe on Christ—will not accept him in any sense—even as an object of trust. It is contrary to nature that he should do so. Christ has for him a strong repellency, causing him to turn from him and flee into the welcome darkness.

And here we have the answer to the oft-made criticism of skeptics, that the Scriptures condemn men for not believing, when their belief or unbelief is a matter beyond their control. Of no such unbelief is condemnation ever asserted. For the man who, in sincere loyalty to duty and truth, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, seeks to know the truth that he may honor it by obedience, the Scriptures have no word but blessing, and his doubts and misgivings call forth only the divine sympathy and help. But such has not been the natural history of the world's unbelief. Its great fault with Christ has generally been, in every age, that he demanded righteousness and purity of heart, the death of selfishness; and it is simply because faith in him contains a moral element that disbelief merits and receives condemnation. If faith contain no such element, the condemnation of unbelief is an act of pure injustice on the part of God, which no gloss can hide.

Having discovered that this faith in Christ is, and must of necessity be, an act of moral, loyal trust, we are prepared to observe another thing regarding it. If any man is deterred from thus loyally accepting Christ by his attachment to a life of sin, something else must happen before this loyal commitment to

Christ can take place. What is this something? *Repentance.* Repentance *must*, in the very nature of the case, precede an act of trust like this. The loyalty of faith is forged in the furnace of repentance.*

Paul recognized this order, for he declared to the elders of the church at Ephesus, that it had been his practice to testify "both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." The order of words in a single case, it is true, does not absolutely determine the order of occurrence; but, when we reflect that this is the uniform order in the New Testament, this order of sequence in expression can hardly be regarded as accidental.

But the fact that this faith in Christ needs to be preceded by repentance has been divinely recognized in even a more striking way. It formed one of the underlying principles of the divine statesmanship. John the Baptist was sent as a forerunner to prepare the people of Israel for the acceptance of Christ, by bringing them to repentance. Repentance toward God, *then* faith in Christ, was the true order as it lay in the divine Mind; and this is the true significance of the mission of John. His mission was to turn the people to repentance, and his baptism was a "baptism of repentance."† Nor was this preparation for faith, by repentance, a preparation for the simple belief of the understanding. So to hold would be to impeach the divine wisdom,

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* See Appendix A., p. 441.

†Paul understood John's mission—his "baptism of repentance"—as looking directly forward to faith in Christ (Acts xix. 4). Repentance was regarded as a needed preparation for this faith.

since a sufficient display of the miraculous would have speedily commanded the conviction of every mind in the nation. The question with which God is grappling is a *moral* one. Faith in Christ is a *moral* act, and God is here preparing the people for it by bringing them to repentance.

This was not only God's view of the matter; it was also Christ's. When he began to preach, his burden to the people was: "Repent ye, and believe (in faith resign yourself unto*) the gospel" (Mk. i. 15). He wanted no faith short of that great *moral, loyal trust* which follows repentance.

Thus we discover that what we have seen *must* be true regarding this trust which arises in an acceptance of Christ as Savior, is so recognized both by the language of Scripture and by the methods of the divine procedure.

We are now prepared to take another step. The ruling principle of the Christian life is Love. Without this, Paul declares the Christian character valueless. It is the vital element in faith and that power by virtue of which it works (Gal. v. 6). When faith loses its love, it is already stricken with paralysis; it can no longer act. There are two great motive forces which may lie behind action—selfishness and love. Mere trust itself cannot act. Trust may work by either selfishness or love. In the business world it works by selfishness; but a faith whose motive of action is no higher than this is not acceptable to Christ.

Now, how does this love come into being? In his first epistle (ch. iv. 19), John tells us that, "We love,

*So Winer defines it in his *Grammar of New Testament Greek*. §31, 5. Compare also Mt. xxi. 32.

because He first loved us." This is the great law of love-making the world over. Now, when does Christ's love become operative with the sinner? The very moment he comes to regard him as the Son of God. Then the advent of Christ into the world becomes in his sight a divine incarnation, and the sufferings of Calvary become the throes of the divine heart for a wandering son. Now, like a flood of sunshine, the whole vision of the Father's yearning and suffering love bursts upon him; and this may touch his heart and form one of his earliest motives to repentance. But, if not, can his spirit, as the work of conversion proceeds, grow mellow in repentance and, under this flood of divine tenderness, be quickened to no responsive affection? If it be so, what hope that he will *ever* be moved under the continued action of the same influence? It must be so, and it *will* be so, under all normal action of the gospel; and, when the soul commits itself to Christ in loyal trust, it will be also with a warm heart. The commitment will be a *loving* commitment. It will be an act of the *heart*. It must be so. Under the divine compulsion of the cross it becomes inevitably so. When trust falls on such an object, it throbs with emotion. Dr. Chas. Hodge, in view of this principle, says: "When moral or religious truth is its [faith's] object, it is always attended by the exercise of the affections."* A cold conversion is a misnomer; a heartless faith is

* It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that this affection is the ripened and expanded love of the mature Christian life. It is gratitude and affection toward *one* Being,—Christ, and God in Christ, -a germ which contains the promise and potency of all that is to follow. It is the one sweet note which is at length to swell into the full diapason of love to all men, including even the enemy—that music of the soul which is called righteousness.

a monstrosity. It is a miscarriage of the converting forces of the gospel.

Such is our reasoning, founded on the nature of the object on which, and the conditions under which, this trust takes place, as presented in the gospel. Is this reasoning correct? Let us submit it to the stern test of fact, that we may, if possible, detect any flaw in its linked certainty.

How do men accept Christ under the preaching of the gospel? Do they receive him selfishly, as a mere object of *trust;* without loyalty, without repentance, without feeling? Go into a revival, and see. Such bare, bald faith has no existence in actual life, under the true preaching of the gospel. The conversions of nearly nineteen centuries have laid their seal on the nature of that faith which is actually being counted for righteousness. Like the voice of many waters, the sublime answer comes to us from all the Christian ages, that the convert's trust in Christ is *moral*, *loyal* and *loving*. The vision of Christ always lays this holy spell upon the heart; and, when the soul springs to meet him in faith, its trust is always this beautiful thing, fragrant with the very spirit of holiness. It is the most beautiful thing in the world.

Let us now be careful to note that it is the acceptance of Christ as an object of trust, that contains *within itself* all these elements. They do not belong to something else, but are qualities belonging to *this one* act. We do not accept Christ as an object of *trust*, and then accept him as an object of *loyalty*, and then, by a third act, accept the *holy life* which he requires us to undertake. The acceptance of Christ is *one* act carrying *within itself* all these elements.

That the acceptance of Christ as an object of trust

is a moral, loyal, loving act, is therefore overwhelmingly proved, both by the nature of the conditions under which it takes place, and by the almost infinite experience of nearly nineteen centuries.

Before proceeding further, let us pause here to notice a matter which cannot be so well-considered elsewhere: Some theologians have felt it necessary to make faith consist of bare trust, excluding any moral or loyal element, lest such elements should conflict with the doctrine of salvation by grace. But theologians have as little to do with determining what faith shall be as Canute had in commanding the waves of the sea. It is not even a question of Scripture interpretation. Trust in Christ has been just this moral, loyal, loving thing for nearly nineteen centuries, and it will continue to be exactly this forever. He who would change it has a graver task before him than that of manipulating Scripture statements. He must change either the nature of the human mind or the motive forces of the gospel. Erase the word *faith* from the Bible, but let the moral and spiritual forces of the gospel play upon the human soul, and this beautiful flower will blossom there just the same. The woman that was a sinner was not commanded to kneel and weep and kiss the feet of the Master; she could not help it. If Paul had failed to see that faith possessed these characteristics, it would have made no difference regarding the *thing*, provided the forces that bring it into existence were present. Gravitation existed before Newton discoved it. We are now dealing simply with a question of *fact*, which lies directly under our eye, and which we are entirely competent to observe. Later, it will be in place to inquire what

the inspired writers think about it. We can see the sun in the heavens and tell its shape, without any help; we can see personal trust in Christ, and tell what it must be, and what it is, without any help. The tides of the ocean rise to the level they reach, not because of any command, but by the attraction of the sun and moon; trust in Christ rises to the moral and spiritual level it reaches, not simply because the Scriptures demand that it shall, but by the attraction of the Sun of Righteousness. It is a question of spiritual physics; it is a proper subject of scientific observation and demonstration. Stand, if you will, on the shore of the human heart; fling adverse interpretations of Scripture in its way; bid it come "thus far and no farther"—and its waves will roll over you, and the tide of trust will stay not till it registers *loyalty* and *love*, under the divine gravitation of the Son of God.

If the doctrine of grace can make no room for a trust like this, it must go in pieces on this rock, for you cannot change *this*. While human nature remains what it is, and gospel motives remain what they are, personal trust in Christ will continue to be *just this*.

But it is not true that such a faith is in any way inconsistent with the doctrine of salvation by grace, or favor. Let man do his best, and he can do little more than *try* to be righteous—little more than "hunger and thirst after righteousness." After all, he does but cling to the strength of another, and open his heart, that the righteousness of another may take place in him. And this very receptiveness is only possible to a moral, loyal, loving trust. There is no moral or spiritual receptiveness in a bald, selfish

trust. It leaves the door of the heart still shut against God. It can have no value beyond that of a speculative plaything.

It is further to be considered that, should we succeed in evacuating faith of any moral worth, we should not thereby escape the supposed difficulty, since remission of sins (justification) is clearly made conditional on *repentance* in Acts ii. 38, and repentance is a moral act.

§3. *Other Conditions Determining the Nature of this Faith.*

We have seen that Christian faith is trust; that it begins in an act of the will; that it is preceded by repentance, and is therefore moral; that it is loyal; and that it is loving—that it is a moral, loyal, loving acceptance of Christ. Faith gains all these characteristics from the object on which it rests and the conditions under which it takes place. It becomes such under laws of spiritual causation. But we have not yet explored all the shaping influences which determine the character of this faith.

We have seen that this faith, or trust, has its beginning in an act of acceptance. But acceptance is a relative act, and is conditioned by some antecedent *proffer*. We can never accept what is not offered. Should we come into possession of any object which has not been offered, it would not be through acceptance. The acceptance which forms a constituent element in faith is, accordingly, an act in response to a divine proffer. This opens up a vast realm of modifying influences which may tend still further to shape the character of Christian faith. We shall best understand this by considering a few illustrations.

A gentleman, meeting a lady with whom he is acquainted, in a railway station, offers to procure her ticket for her and look after her baggage, and she cordially accepts his offer. Here the offer is to do some trifling service, and the acceptance embraces this and no more, and there the incident closes. Some time after, on visiting her at her home, he hands her a beautiful present, and says, "Will you accept this?" The object is something which she greatly desires to possess, but she may hesitate, or refuse. She feels that the proffer means more this time than before, and that the acceptance will involve all that the proffer implies. She realizes that the import of an acceptance is as extensive as that of the offer, and takes its color and character from it, and she may decline the gift. But if she does decide to accept it, let us notice that she will not accept it in the same *manner* as she accepted the trifling service on the former occasion. The gentlemen is holding out his hand toward her with the gift, and if she accepts it she will not simply permit him to do something for her, but will reach forth her hand and *take* it. The conditions of the proffer are this time such that acceptance is not simply passive acquiescence, but a *taking*. On another occasion the gentleman visits her and makes a very different proffer—the proffer of *himself*. He asks that she will accept him as her husband. If she accepts this offer it will not be a mere incident soon past, but will involve her life-long destiny, and to a greater degree than any other acceptance can. She will not accept this offer until she is ready to grant all, and then she will accept the offer with all that it involves. Let us observe further that if she does decide to accept, there will

be two acceptances—one which is called *consent*, or engagement, and one which is called a *taking*, or marriage. In the first acceptance she does not accept the man as her husband, but accepts his proposal that she take him as her husband at some future time. The one acceptance is simply the promise of the other; the engagement is the promise of marriage; it is a step *preparatory* to the *taking* by the parties of each other as husband and wife. Let us further notice that this great acceptance which is of the nature of a *taking* constitutes an abiding relation, which, on account of its closeness and intimacy, is called *union* (*one-ion*), and the man and wife are said to be *one*. Now, the gentleman's proposal was, that she receive him in this intimate relation, and when she so accepts him under proper conditions, *that* ACCEPTANCE *constitutes the union*. On a former occasion the gentleman offered her a present, but this offer did not make the object hers until she completed the transaction by taking it. He now offers himself as her husband; and when she takes him as such, he becomes her husband, and this her acceptance, or taking, consummates the union which is called marriage. The proper conditions being present, the woman, by *accepting*, or taking this man as her husband, enters into union with him. Here, then, is an acceptance which constitutes a relation, and that relation a union.

Now, what is the nature of the divine proffer? Not simply on certain conditions to remit our sins, but that we shall enter into union with Christ, so that we shall be "in him" and he "in us." The relation contemplated is even closer than that of marriage, and no less tender; and remission of sins is not

offered apart from this relation, but through it. If we accept the divine proffer we shall accept all this, for it is all embraced in the offer. But as the acceptance of marriage is not a passive acquiescence, but an active *taking*, so the acceptance of Christ, which is also the acceptance of a person,—not a passive reception of some benefit at his hands,—is a *taking* of Christ as our Savior, and in the holy relation of life-union with him. When Christ makes this proffer he does his part preparatory to entering into union with us; when we accept him, or take him in this relation, under proper conditions, we enter into union with him. But we have seen that the faith that is reckoned for righteousness begins in an act of the will, and that act an acceptance; and as there can be no acceptance of anything that is not offered, and as the gospel offers none of its blessings except "in Christ," it follows that this faith must be an acceptance of Christ in this relation of union, or in other words, the convert's mental act of entering into union with Christ. We must be careful, however, to distinguish between the two stages of trust—that of repentance, and that which follows repentance. When, in repentance the sinner *resolves* to take Christ as his Savior, a species of anticipative trust arises, but this is not appropriative. No mere resolve appropriates anything. But when the penitent turns his mind toward Christ, and in a welcoming act, under proper conditions, definitely receives him into the life,—an act which is not simply determinative but *social* in nature,—he appropriates Christ and enters into union with him. He then, for the first time, trusts him *as* his Savior. His trust is practical and possessive.

Faith in Christ is, therefore, not only a moral,

loyal, loving acceptance of Christ, but the spiritual act of entering into union with him. It is by its very nature such a spiritual act, and the only one by which we can enter into union with Christ. There is no other step in conversion that possesses this character. The belief of the truth concerning Christ is not a union-forming act. It may be present in those who are at enmity with him. James says "the devils believe and tremble." Repentance, which involves a change of feeling and purpose, though it is indispensable and forms the moral and sympathetic basis for union, is not in itself union-forming. Only the act of will that reaches forth and takes Christ as one's own in a carefully-considered, definite and unreserved commitment and reception, is by nature union-constituting. And acceptance of Christ becomes this from the fact that Christ offers himself only in this relation. Let it be granted only that faith is trust, and the conditions under which it takes place in Christianity cause it to be not only a moral, loyal, loving acceptance of Christ, but the act of entering into union with him. We do not now pause to inquire what the Scriptures teach on this subject, but simply note what *must* be through the operation of spiritual laws.

But there is another element in the situation which gives its color to the act of acceptance of Christ and calls for a further descriptive designation. When we take a present from the hand of another, or when a man and woman take each other as husband and wife, there is nothing in the case that calls for strenuous effort, and the word *take* sufficiently describes the act; but when men enter into union with Christ, they take him as their *Savior* from evils from which

they struggle to be freed with extreme difficulty, and which make the taking of Christ a matter of strenuous spiritual effort. When, therefore, we have in view this aspect of the act, we most fitly speak of it as a *laying hold on* Christ, and its continuance as a *clinging to* him. The particular conditions under which it takes place cause it to be not simply an acceptance, but a strenuous grasping and clinging of the soul, as one being saved from great perils; but as the connection thus formed is intimate and life-lasting, it is also a union.

There is another aspect of the case also which calls for a stronger designation than the mere word *acceptance*. We may accept things from our equals or inferiors, and under conditions of no prior obligation, but the conditions here are such as largely to change the color of acceptance. God has been our rightful ruler, and in our sinful life we have disregarded his claims. His proffer of salvation is on condition that we submit to his will. This will cause our acceptance to be a *surrender*—an acceptance of the divine authority together with the divine blessing. But even this does not fully describe the situation; for the thing to be done is not simply to transform us into loyal subjects. We are the victims of a great helplessness and cannot save ourselves. Our only hope is to put ourselves into the hands of another, who must do the saving, and obediently to co-operate with him in his efforts. But this complete commitment is most fitly described as *self-surrender*. This, with its double aspect of submission to authority and self-commitment for salvation, is the most adequate designation of the *acceptance* of faith. Any acceptance must, under such conditions, naturally be *self-surrender*.

CHAPTER III.

WHERE DOES THIS SPIRITUAL ACT TAKE PLACE?

We are now prepared to take another step in our investigation. We have seen that trust, when taking place under Christian conditions, becomes a moral, loyal, loving acceptance of Christ and entrance into union with him; or, to give it other expression, it is a complete self-surrender to and laying hold on Christ, continued in a life-lasting clinging to him. But there are still other conditions whose influence on this faith remains to be considered, and we are now prepared to ask in the light of spiritual laws this question: At what point in the spiritual history will this mental step take place? This will depend on two things—the nature of the spiritual act itself, and the conditions under which it takes place.

It now becomes necessary to distinguish this mental act from two other mental acts which are also called faith, and which resemble it in some respects.

When conclusive proof of any fact is presented to the mind, belief follows immediately and involuntarily. True, a certain bias of feeling may sometimes interfere with belief, especially if the evidence be not very strong; but, if the mind believes at all, it will believe immediately. It cannot say to itself, I will not credit this now, but will believe it after the lapse of thirty days. Such a mental procedure would be impossible. But this belief is not trust, and is regulated by a different law from that of the faith we are considering. There is, however, a form of *trust* which is subject to the same law.

A young lady far away from home is threatened with a dire disaster which she sees no way to avert. She is weeping in her room, when a knock is heard at the door, and her father enters, and after an affectionate greeting, leads her to the sofa, takes her hand in his, and in strong, kind words, says: "Daughter, I know all about it, and I am going to save you. I have taken the matter in hand and it will soon be all over. Do not weep. It will be all right. And now while I go out for a little, lie down and rest." A smile of joy breaks through her tears, and when the father returns she is sleeping sweetly. She has *trusted;* and she did it immediately. For her to have said, "I will go on in my despair for another night, and then at ten o'clock to-morrow morning trust father," would have been impossible. If she trusts him at all, she will do so as soon as the conditions of the trust are presented. Here trust is *involuntary* and, by its very nature, immediate. But all this is very different in the case of a trust that begins in an act of the will.

A man goes to a physician to consult regarding an ailment that is causing him much trouble. After examining the case, the physician says, "Do you drink?"—"Yes."—"Well, I can cure you in a short time if you will let liquor alone, but I will not consent to take your case unless you do." The man is very much wedded to his cups, and says: "I cannot tell what I will do about it to-day. Perhaps I will see you again." The man is not trusting that physician for a cure, nor can he do so till he accepts his services. The conditions of such a trust are all before him; but it does *not* take place immediately, may never take place, or may take place at some future time. The introduction of the volitional element may affect the

question of time in different ways, and it is possible for our patient to say to himself, "I will have one more week of carousal, and then I will break off and put myself into the doctor's hands"; and until the week elapses and he does so, he will not be trusting the doctor for a cure. Thus it is possible that a voluntary faith may be placed some time in the future. This is precisely what men often do regarding Christ. They say, "I will enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time, and then give myself up to Christ." Until they do this, they do not trust him as their Savior, though the conditions of such trust have long been before them. The point for us to note is, that a voluntary trust may occupy various positions with respect to time, and just when it will take place may depend on a variety of conditions.

We are now prepared for the question, At what time, under the conditions as we find them in Christianity, will this acceptance of Christ in a relation of life-union take place? We may answer that, unless there be some grave reasons which demand delay, it will take place immediately after repentance. In speaking of this faith as an act of union with Christ, I have compared it to the act by which the union of marriage is consummated; but there is one important particular in which the two cases differ. There is nothing in conversion which corresponds to the *engagement* which precedes marriage. A man and woman may agree to take each other as husband and wife at some designated time in the future; and such an engagement implies that they shall live in their present state for a certain period, and then exchange it for the marriage relation; and they are at perfect liberty to do this. But not so with the Christian

convert. For the sinner to say, "Lord, I will surrender myself to thee one year from now," would be immoral, because it would involve a determination to continue in sin for another year. And if Christ should consent to such an arrangement his act would also be immoral, because it would be granting the license to sin. It is not the *duty* of a woman to marry a certain man, and therefore cannot be her duty to do so at any particular time; it *is* the duty of the sinner to surrender to Christ and lay hold on his saving mercy, to enter into union with him,* and therefore it is not a matter optional with him when he shall do it. We have in connection with marriage (1) love, or change of heart; (2) the formation of a mental purpose to grant the suitor's request; (3) the engagement; (4) the actual union of marriage. We have in conversion (1) a change of heart, which takes place in repentance; (2) the formation of a purpose to surrender to Christ and receive him as our Savior, the final element in repentance; (3) the mental act of giving one's self up to Christ and entering into union with him. There can be no temporizing with regard to this last step, for all delays for pleasure or policy's sake are sinful and vitiate the repentance. So far as such considerations are concerned, this faith must take place immediately; not for a rational or emotional reason, as in the case of the two other forms of faith spoken of, but for a *moral* reason.

But, while no temporizing conditions can be per-

* It is only of those that are *in* Christ that it is said that there is no condemnation (Rom. viii. 1). The Scriptures consider those who have not entered into union with Christ as living in sin, and therefore still under condemnation. He who neglects union with the Source that shall make righteousness practicable is prolonging his sin.

mitted to delay this spiritual step, the question arises whether there may be any conditions whatever that can do so. And to this we must answer, There can.

We saw in an earlier part of this work that mere repentance does not sever us from the sinful life—that there are certain sins of a self-perpetuating nature which must be undone before they can be terminated, and that while we may not commit any fresh acts of transgression, we are just as guilty in passively permitting these wrongs to continue, as if we were actually perpetrating new offenses. The touching of a torch to a building in which there are sleeping inmates is an act of the nature of murder, but, though the perpetrator may repent of having done this, every moment that he sees the flames mounting to their work of death and does nothing to quench them, to give an alarm, or to waken the sleepers, he is perpetuating the original act of murder. We saw that in view of this it had been a principle of the divine government, both in the Old and in the New Testaments, to require that such wrongs be righted before accepting any religious offerings from the offender. We saw also that, with the man who had been living away from Christ in a life of sin, the weight of his influence was against Christ and his kingdom, and that this great wrong would continue in full force despite any mere mental act on his part, and that the step necessary to undoing this wrong is *profession;* and that, in accordance with this, profession has been made a condition of divine acceptance. If the penitent realizes these things—and if he does not he should be taught them—he will be stayed in his purpose to make an offering of himself to God until he can do so consistently with these moral conditions.

But this will cause him to delay his self-offering until profession,—or rather, he will not so much delay his self-offering as hasten his profession,—and in that act he will surrender himself to Christ. Thus, the *moral* element in this spiritual act will determine that it shall take place in profession, and the particular act which God has ordained as a means of profession is baptism. The teachings of the New Testament on this point are very clear, and he who accepts them without bias will not be inclined to make what he regards as an unacceptable offering of himself to God, but will hasten to fulfil those moral conditions which will insure divine acceptance. There may be, therefore, a very brief interval between repentance and this act of self-surrender.

There is another reason why this spiritual act should not take place before profession. The spiritual faculties have just been quickened into action, and as they are new and untried forces in the life, there is no means of knowing how strong they are. But the convert's faith must be strong enough to face the world in profession, or he cannot live the Christian life before men. If he realizes this, he will not be inclined to present his faith for acceptance until he is assured of its fitness to fulfil faith's purpose, and he will instinctively seek some test of its strength before offering himself to God. An act of profession furnishes such a test. The act of self-surrender will, therefore, by virtue of a spiritual law, take place at the time of profession.

Still further, however strong this faith may be, it cannot succeed alone; and recognizing this, God has furnished two strong arms of power to support it. These are Christ and his Church. If the first is

mighty, so is the second; and no faith that feels its own insufficiency will venture to offer itself for acceptance apart from these forces that condition its success, especially as God has nowhere promised such acceptance. Now, connection with one of these spiritual forces—Christ—can be made by an act of the mind, but connection with the church can only be made by a visible act of the nature of profession. The convert is therefore not ready to make his self-offering to God before profession, and this offering will fitly take place in that act.

Again, the fountains of the great deep have been broken up in the convert's heart, and the rushing together of the wanderer and the waiting Father will be an act of the most intense emotion. No other such greeting occurs within the span of a human life. But the heart when deeply moved spurns the feebler forms of expression and longs for the eager kiss, the fond embrace, and other most tender acts of endearment. To deny it these were to starve it and quench its holy fires. There is no more sweetly solemn act than Christian baptism—none which could be more precious to the heart at this point. If there be deep feeling the soul will long to present itself to Christ in such an act; if there be not, the conversion is not what it should be. With eager joy the soul will seize upon such an act in which to present its surrender to Christ and there receive the divine kiss of absolution. Baptism, on its inner or spiritual side is *justification by faith*. There the faith—the self-surrender—takes place, and there the justification—that is, if the heart has its way. But the heart will not delay its surrender for baptism; it will rather bring baptism to its own sweet time, and that will be

immediately. And so it was in the apostolic days.

All these moral, practical, and spiritual reasons will conspire to cause this spiritual act which constitutes the faith that is reckoned for righteousness to take place in baptism; and it is only the ignoring of these important considerations that will cause it to take place earlier. But it remains to mention one other condition that will render it impossible for this spiritual act to take place sooner.

It has already been seen that an acceptance without an offer is impossible, and that no acceptance can go before an offer, or be larger or otherwise conditioned than the offer. Now, consistently with the principles just mentioned, the gospel places an act of profession (baptism) as a condition in its proffer of salvation; it makes baptism a condition of remission of sins, or salvation (Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16; 1. Pet. iii. 21, *et al*), and the act by which we enter into union with Christ (Gal. iii. 26, 27; Rom. vi. 3, 5). In view of this fact the soul *cannot* take Christ as its own or enter into union with him before that act. It cannot do this even mentally, because it cannot accept what is not offered, even though it might desire to do so. A woman cannot enter into union with a man who has not offered himself in marriage, however she might wish to do so; and the mental act of taking him as her husband which takes place in marriage, cannot take place *even in her mind* before that time. No man can buy a farm which is not for sale; the mental steps even of such a transaction cannot take place; and if the owner consents only to sell his farm for $5,000, no such transaction, even mentally, can take place on a basis of $4,000. The acceptance must be as the proffer; its conditions and time cannot be

different. In the apostolic age, when baptism was made a condition of remission of sins and union with Christ, *this spiritual act took place in baptism*, and not before it; and under the same teaching it would inevitably do so now. When the mighty reasons why baptism should be made a condition of acceptance are realized, and the fact that the Scriptures make it so is preached, it will have the effect, not of suspending remission of sins on a merely formal act, but of placing the faith that is reckoned for righteousness *in* baptism; and the tendency will be to hasten baptism rather than delay faith. In conversion, for moral, practical, and spiritual reasons, the heart should be ready to present its surrender to Christ very soon, and it is then that baptism should take place. This will cause its performance, as in the apostolic age, at the very time of conversion. Place baptism where the heart demands it, and it cannot be empty; but put it out of place, and it becomes a useless form.

We are now prepared to attend to another fact. The taking of this spiritual step, which, as we have seen, occurs in baptism, ushers in *Christian faith*—faith as it is found in the Christian life. Not till this moment does faith in this form exist. This step is not a mere incident in the spiritual history, leaving the state of mind where it was before, but the entrance upon a new stage of trust quite different from anything that has preceded it. When a Christian prays or performs any other Christian duty he does not enter on a new and different stage of experience, but his attitude toward God and Christ remains what it was before the act, though he may have been strengthened and otherwise blessed; the charac-

ter of his mental state has not been changed. But not so with this spiritual step; not till this is taken does the convert reach the stage of *Christian* faith, and possess that faith in all its essentiel qualities. It would not be true to say, however, that several of its elements have not had an earlier origin. He first believed the truth regarding Christ, which constitutes the intellectual element of his faith. He then repented of his sins and determined to lay hold on Christ and surrender himself to his authority and keeping, and with this purpose there arose a species of anticipative trust that Christ would *become* his Savior when he fulfilled this purpose in giving himself up to him; but Christ is not yet his, and he has not yet entered into union with him.* Then comes the spiritual act in which he mentally utters to Christ his surrender: "I give myself to thee, I take thee as my Lord and Savior, forsaking all my sins and entering upon a righteous life. Accept me as thine." This mental act, as we have seen, in view of all the con-

* I have no doubt that many persons regard *making up one's mind* to serve Christ and obey him as surrender to him, but such an act is not surrender, even mental. Surrender is a *social* act and is the giving up to another. When a conquered general surrenders to the victor, his act comprises two parts—a mental part, and a physical part. The physical part may consist of words, such as "I surrender," or of an act, such as handing his sword to the other; but in either case the thing expressed is the same, and is, "I surrender." But it is the *mind* that says this; and it tells the truth. It has not *already* surrendered, though it has *decided* to do so,—but does so *in* this act. There must be a mental act like this in our surrender to God, and it will be distinct from the act of forming a *purpose* to serve him. It is very common to blend mental acts which are closely related, as cause and effect, into one conception; and much confusion results therefrom, which sometimes leads to important errors. The distinction in this case is an important one; for God does not forgive even the Christian's sins in view of his mere repentance; prayer, confession, and forgiveness of others, are also conditions (Mt. vi. 12; Lk. xi. 4; 1 Jn. i. 9).

ditions, falls in baptism; and as it is the act of acceptance of the divine proffer, it is the act of *appropriation* of the divine blessing. This spiritual act is by its very nature *appropriation* (appropriative faith), and as what is appropriated is afterward possessed, it becomes *possessive* faith—something that has not existed till this moment. An anticipative trust which rose as an incident to repentance looked *forward* to Christ's becoming our Savior; this *rests in him* as *already* ours. The mental states are quite different, and it is this possessive trust that is to continue throughout the Christian life. This is *Christian* faith—the faith of the Christian life. It is also the faith that justifies; since, according to the principles of the divine government with respect to perpetuated sins, no earlier self-offering can be accepted. For important moral, practical, and spiritual reasons this faith does not antedate, but finds embodiment in, Christian baptism as a solemn act of profession, and thus baptism becomes a condition of the justification accorded to faith.

We have now made a long journey. Starting with faith as a mere act of unethical, unspiritual trust, we have watched the interaction of spiritual laws and gospel conditions until we have seen it grow glorious and blossom into one of the sublimest acts of the human soul. We have discovered not only what this faith is, but when, in view of the moral, practical, and spiritual conditions which affect it, it will naturally take place. And in all this we have not been dependent on any of the statements of the Scriptures regarding it, beyond the mere fact that it is some kind of trust. It will now remain for us to inquire

how the writers of the Scriptures regard it. Have they also made this journey and reached the same conclusion? or rather, have they seen all these things intuitively, without resort to any course of reasoning? and does their language show that they looked upon these facts as we have found them to exist? They might have seen less than we have discovered and still been inspired, and they might have seen all and not have spoken of it; for they were not given to philosophic disquisitions. They never undertake to give us a natural history of faith, and what they thought concerning it must be gleaned from their references to it when speaking of other subjects. As preparatory to a correct understanding of their references to it, let us pause to make one further inquiry: If faith be what we have found it to be, how, in accordance with the ordinary habits of speech, will they be likely to speak of it?

1. If faith be the spiritual element in baptism, it will be natural for them to use faith and baptism interchangeably in some connections, ascribing to baptism what faith accomplishes, and when speaking concerning the nature of faith to describe what takes place in baptism. If the spiritual act which justifies takes place in baptism, we shall expect to find such language of identification, which otherwise would seem strange.

2. It would be natural to speak of salvation as being by faith, without mentioning baptism; and if in other places baptism should be spoken of as a condition of salvation, there would be no contradiction, and the writers would not feel called upon to make any explanation as though the statements were incompat-

ible. Salvation by faith would, as a matter of course, be salvation by baptism, and *vice versa*.

3. As this spiritual act which takes place in baptism possesses various intellectual, moral, and spiritual qualities, and as these do not all come into existence at the same time, but through a process involving successive steps, the act of believing might at times be viewed as taking place at the point of its consummation, and at other times as a process involving all the steps of conversion; and on still other occasions the writers might have in mind some particular step in the series, and use *faith* to designate it. Thus, in some cases men would be told to believe and do something *else* in order to salvation, and at other times to believe and they should be saved; and these statements would not be inconsistent, but the connection would be likely to show that the word was used in one case in a narrower, and in another in a wider, sense. It might sometimes appear that the belief referred to was mere intellectual assent, again that it included this with repentance, and again that it involved the entire spiritual process of conversion. Such various uses of words are very common, and may be found on nearly every page of our dictionaries.

If faith be referred to by the Scripture writers in any of the above ways it will be in perfect accord with what we have discovered regarding it; but it would be incompatible with some other views of it.

CHAPTER IV.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH.

BEFORE proceeding to consider at length the Scripture teaching regarding the nature of faith and its relation to baptism, it will be well to pause and examine more fully the character of Abraham's faith, concerning which we have only thus far elicited the fact that it was *trust*. What was this faith? what was its setting in Abraham's spiritual history? and how far does it coincide with Christian faith?

§ *1. The Nature of Abraham's Faith and its Correspondence with Christian Faith.*

Paul founds his argument on justification by faith on an incident in the life of Abraham, in which a mental act representing a mental state is said to have been counted to him for righteousness.* That incident is recorded in the 15th chapter of Genesis. Let us take our stand there and look about us and see what we can discover. What was this faith that was then counted for righteousness?

I. It was not the belief on the part of Abraham of the truth regarding the being and nature of God. There was a time when Abraham took this step, for

*The Old Testament record of the life of Abraham has lately received very free handling by Higher Critics; but this can in no way affect our argument, though even their most extreme conclusions should be adopted. Paul took this record just as it stands, and we must do so if we would understand his use of it. Were it our object to make an independent use of this narrative, some reference to the questions raised by modern criticism might be necessary; but for our present purpose they can have no bearing.

his father was an idolater (Josh. xxiv. 2), but it was long before this counting of his faith for righteousness to which Paul refers. Clearly, then, no mental act of a similar character can constitute the faith that is reckoned for righteousness in the gospel dispensation. The intellectual belief in the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus cannot be the faith that justifies, though it certainly forms an element in that faith.

2. Abraham's faith to which Paul refers was not followed by repentance as an antecedent condition of its being counted for righteousness, but was so counted immediately, without waiting for any subsequent act, either mental or physical. No faith, therefore, that needs to be supplemented by repentance can be the faith that is counted for righteousness, for it cannot be the faith of Abraham. The narrative not only makes no mention of repentance as following Abraham's faith, but positively excludes it. It is the office of repentance to make the heart and life loyal, but Abraham had been conspicuously loyal to God for many years. Moreover, the language of God to Abraham immediately preceding this act of faith that God counted to him for righteousness excludes the idea of unloyalty or unfaithfulness to God: "Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward" was the approving address with which he was greeted. The purpose of repentance had already been realized in Abraham's character; his faith sprang out of a loyal heart. But this involves more: Abraham *had* already repented. When this took place we do not know, but we know that there was a time when he did not believe in the true God, and he could not be loyal to a Being in whom he did not believe. Following this belief there must have been a time when he

resolved to forsake all that was inconsistent with the service of God and enter upon that service with full purpose of heart. But this was repentance. How profound this repentance was we can only judge by its fruits, and the narrative represents him as one of the most obedient and faithful of the servants of God. Not till within a few years has the human eye looked upon the source of the Nile, but all mankind have been no less sure that it had a source. So the earlier experiences of Abraham are hidden from view. We do not meet him till he is seventy-five years old, and then find him a loyal, devout servant of God. This character must have had a source. The world could not see the source of the Nile, but the river was there, and there could be no doubt about the source. With Abraham the loyal, devout character is there, and there can be no doubt about the repentance. How deep it was we cannot say, but it took place, and produced some most wholesome fruit. But the faith that Paul refers to as having been counted for righteousness came *after* this repentance. So far, therefore, as Abraham's case has any bearing, the faith that is now counted for righteousness must follow, not precede, repentance. With the Christian convert, as with Abraham, the faith that justifies must spring out of a loyal heart.

3. From an examination of the narrative in Genesis xv. we do not find that Abraham's mental act that was counted for righteousness was an act of *self-surrender*. It is represented only as an act of *trust* in view of a promise which God had made to him. But that God is our rightful Ruler and our needed Savior is founded in the nature of things, and self-surrender must have been just as necessary for Abraham as for

any other person. How is it, then, that we find no trace of this step in that faith that was counted to Abraham for righteousness? The answer is, that it had already taken place. How do we know this? Because we find him in the actual service and in the absolute keeping of God, and he could not have reached that relation without putting himself there. When that self-surrender took place we do not know, but the most detailed account of it could not make the fact more certain. At some time in his past life he had, in an act of repentance, made up his mind to give himself up to God, and some time following that resolve he had made a commitment of his life to God. This was self-surrender; and this fact furnishes a most excellent reason why the faith spoken of in Genesis xv. was not an act of self-surrender. When a man is already in a house, he cannot enter it. Abraham's act of trust that was counted for righteousness sprang out of a loyal, committed life, and partook of these qualities without originating them.

There is another thing to be noted. We saw when considering the nature of Christian faith, that there are two stages of trust—one which arises as an incident to repentance, and one which succeeds self-surrender. The one is anticipative; the other possessive. The one is transient and soon gives place to something else; the other is the abiding faith of the Christian life. The one looks forward to being in a covenant relation with Christ; the other abides in that relation. Which of these corresponds to that faith of Abraham that was counted for righteousness? Certainly not anticipative trust, for any anticipation which he may have indulged before his self-surrender was long before the faith spoken of in Gen. xv.,

which succeeded his self-surrender. The promise which God gave him was not conditional, to be appropriated only in the performance of some future act. It was his already. His trust was that of one already in a covenant relation with God, and it was the permanent faith of his life. It received no new elements after that time, but continued to be the same mental attitude ever after, though growing in strength through trial and obedience. It corresponds to the completed faith of the Christian life, which also remains ever the same in quality, though varying in strength according to the conditions of its exercise. So far as the life of Abraham bears on our question, it is the possessive trust that a man has, after having fulfilled all conditions of becoming a Christian, that is counted for righteousness.

But this trust of Abraham did not, as in the case of Christian conversion, arise in immediate connection with self-surrender. This brings us to another fact.

4. The trust of Abraham on this occasion was not the first of his trusting in God. He had long not only believed the truth regarding God and been loyal to him, but trusted in him. He had left his former habitation long before at God's direction, and moved by a promise of great blessing to himself and posterity. He had been sustained in his pilgrimage and homeless wanderings by this hope, which is a form of trust; and there was nothing in this trust that had called forth the divine disapprobation. The author of the Book of Hebrews speaks of it as a lofty example of the heroism of faith, and says of those who exercise it, "God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a

city" (Heb. xi: 16). God's language to Abraham in Gen. xv. 1, also shows that he enjoyed the divine approbation. How, then, did this faith—this trust springing out of a loyal, committed life—differ from the faith that is said in the sixth verse to have been counted to Abraham for righteousness? I think the answer should be, that the latter was very strong—that it arose to the height of heroic trust—and embraced the miraculous in the object of its confidence.

The previous promises in which Abraham had trusted, might all have been fulfilled through the providential workings of God. True, when he left his former home to come into the land of Canaan on the promise that God would make of him a great nation, he was seventy-five years old, and Sarah, his wife, was sixty-five; but he took Lot, his nephew, with him, and may easily have supposed that the promise was to be fulfilled through him. In course of time Lot left him, and he seems to have fallen back on the supposition that the promise was to receive fulfillment through Eliezer, a servant of his house. He did not lose his faith, and was still loyal and true to God, but this change of prospect was a great sorrow to him; and when God commends him and promises to be his "shield" and "exceeding great reward," the words seem to fall almost mockingly on his disappointment, and he breaks silence and tells God the burden of his heart. This calls forth the astounding promise that is either to call forth a sublime faith, or make him an infidel. He is led forth under the starry sky and bidden to count the stars. He cannot number the jeweled splendor, and God says, "So shall thy seed be that shall come forth out of thine own bowels." Abraham was one hun-

dred years old (Rom. iv.) and his wife was ninety. Could the promise be fulfilled? Nature said, No. Faith faced this tremendous *no* and said, YES—and it was counted to him for righteousness.

What was this faith that was counted for righteousness? *A sublime trust in God's promise, involving the miraculous, springing out of a loyal and committed life.* This is its character as drawn from the narrative of Abraham's life, and this was Paul's view of it. In speaking of it in the Book of Romans (ch. iv. 16-25), he dwells on its strength and the fact that it was not staggered by what was, according to the laws of nature, impossible, and then concludes, "Wherefore also it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." Paul considers the obstacle to be overcome in the fulfillment of the promise in this case as great as that of raising the dead; and corresponding to this, the Christian faith includes the belief in an actual resurrsection and all that it involves. Any faith, therefore, which eliminates the miraculous, cannot correspond to this faith of Abraham which was counted for righteousness, and is lacking in an indispensable feature of Christian faith.

Before proceeding further, let us pause and notice one fact that has now come into view. The steps by which Abraham reached that faith that was counted to him for righteousness, were distributed over a period of many years. He first came to the knowledge of the true God; then he became loyal to him—a change of attitude which it is the office of repentance to bring about; then there was a bowing to the authority of God and committing his whole life to his guidance and keeping; and then, many years later, came this trust that was counted for righteousness.

In Christian conversion we have similar steps and in the same order, but with this difference: they take place more rapidly. We have, first, the knowledge of the truth concerning God and Christ reached through the faith of the understanding; then repentance; then, following closely, self-surrender, and immediately thereon, possessive trust, or the Christian faith that justifies. Self-surrender is the mental act by which we put ourselves into Christ's hands already waiting to receive us, and it is therefore the act of appropriation, which is by its very nature the beginning of possession. Thus, self-surrender and possessive faith, in Christian conversion, lie so closely together as to be practically one act, while Abraham's self-surrender and the faith that was accounted to him for righteousness were separated by many years. What is the cause of this shortening of perspective in Christian conversion? Simply this: All promises and privileges are now made known to the sinner at the same time that his duty to repent becomes known, and the mental steps can be taken as rapidly as the mind can operate. But with Abraham, the promise which called forth the trust that was counted for righteousness was not uttered until many years after his self-surrender.* Thus, two mental

*A question emerges here which we may be able to answer only conjecturally: Was the faith which Abraham had before this time so far insufficient that he remained during all these years unpardoned? Repentance toward God issues in loyalty to God, and that Abraham possessed this loyalty and had also surrendered himself to the divine guidance and care is unquestionable. He had also had a trust in God which had been the shaping principle of his life. Did he, after all this, remain unpardoned? On this the Scriptures do not speak, but we have the following facts: 1. Abraham enjoyed God's approval (Gen. xv. 1). 2. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of this early faith of Abraham as a distinguished example of heroic faith (Heb. xi. 8

steps which are taken so closely together as to be practically one in Christian conversion are separated by many years with Abraham. This will always be the case if the conditions of their being taken are separated by a period of time, instead of all being presented to the mind at once. Abraham's advance was through many years in a slowly growing light, while the gospel is a single sunburst of duty and privilege. It is important that we take good note of this, for we shall find other things in long perspective in the life of Abraham, and from a similar cause. We are now prepared to consider another fact.

5. The mental act of trust which constituted the faith that was counted to Abraham for righteousness did not have any external embodiment. In Christian

sq). 3. According to James, Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness, at least once after this time (Jas. ii. 21-23); so that it would seem that this was an act that was not self-excluding, and could take place more than once. If the counting of Abraham's faith for righteousness in Gen. xv. did not exclude its being so counted again at the time of the offering of Isaac, why should it exclude the possibility of an earlier counting? In view of these considerations I do not see that we are warranted in deciding that Abraham was not justified before the occurrence in Gen. xv., but in the silence of the Scriptures I should not desire to make any affirmation on that point. There are no more certain evidences of a loyal and committed life after this time than there were before, and we can see no good reason why justification should have been withheld.

If we are to give weight to what James says, we must understand the justification to be an act that can be repeated, and the following explanation may not be far from the truth.

Abraham had been justified before, but at this time (Gen. xv.) his faith rose to so high a degree of heroic trust that God honored it with a new mark of approval, pronouncing him righteous in a still higher degree than he had done before, and when his faith rose to a new height, both as loyalty and trust, in the offering of Isaac, God again pronounced him righteous in a still higher degree. Thus these justifications would be *intensive* rather than absolute or primary. Some such explanation would seem necessary from the fact that these justifications admit of repetition.

conversion we have seen that there are important reasons why this mental act should take place in baptism, and have noted the fact—which we shall show at greater length later—that the Scriptures place it there. But we find no such act as an embodiment of Abraham's faith at this time, and the justification takes place without waiting for any such condition. How shall we explain this? Does not this negative all that we have said on this subject? and does it not seem to stand in conflict with any view that would make baptism a condition of the remission of sins? Does not the difficulty lie even deeper than this? Have we not shown that baptism as a condition of remission of sins is not a mere arbitrary appointment, but that it has its reason in the demands of moral and spiritual law—demands which must be supposed to affect the case of Abraham as certainly as that of Christian conversion? Is not Abraham's case regarded by Paul as a type of Christian conversion? and if Abraham can be justified in view of a simple mental act apart from any such step, why cannot others? Do we not search the record in vain for any such act as Christian baptism either taking place as an investiture of this mental act or forming a condition of Abraham's justification? Is it not clear, then, that no such act can be necessary to justification? Before drawing this conclusion let us be sure that our reasoning does not prove too much. It is true that we find no baptism in the record given of this faith in Gen. xv., but it is also true that we find no repentance and no self-surrender there. The narrative is a very simple statement of fact. God had been speaking approvingly to Abraham. Abraham tells him of his great disappointment and God then promises him

issue from his own body. Abraham believes God, and it is counted to him for righteousness. There is no sign of repentance or self-surrender here, and Paul finds none in his interpretation of the case in Rom. iv. Shall we, then, conclude that repentance and self-surrender are not necessary to justification, and rule out not only baptism, but the moral element of faith? If we are to depend on the bare statement of this narrative we must do so. But such a method would be a grave misinterpretation of Abraham's spiritual history. The truth is, that Abraham had repented and become loyal to God long before, and had committed his life to God's keeping; and this act of trust springs out of a loyal heart and a committed life. This trust was, therefore, loyal trust; this faith was moral faith. And, while it is true that all these elements of Abraham's spiritual character may have risen with this sublime trust to a higher level, they did not have their origin here, but arose long before. If we must step outside of this narrative into the unwritten history of Abraham's past to find his repentance and self-surrender, why is it not admissible to seek something else there? But we must not do this simply for the sake of escaping a difficulty. If we are to place anything else in Abraham's past there must be a good reason for it. Now, as we begin to look at this question on its merits we find ourselves face to face with a surprising fact. When we were examining the conditions of Christian conversion we found weighty moral and spiritual reasons why an act of profession like baptism should form an investiture of justifying faith and be a condition of remission of sins. When we look at Abraham's faith on this occasion we find not one of these reasons applicable.

There was no moral reason why he should make a profession at this time, and there was no spiritual reason why his faith should take place in an act like baptism. It was simply the belief of a great promise; and as we look about us we do not find that the belief of promises usually calls for physical investiture. There was no reason why anything like baptism should take place at this point in Abraham's spiritual history; and, if there is as little reason for it in Christian conversion, it is certainly out of place. Now, let us ask: Was there any point in Abraham's spiritual history where an act corresponding to baptism *was* demanded?

When Abraham was worshiping his ancestral gods, the whole weight of his influence was in their favor, and thus against the true God. When he ceased to worship these gods and began to worship the true God, if this were done secretly, the whole weight of his influence would still be unchanged and lie in favor of the old gods. The voice of his life would be against God; and this would be a moral wrong. Hence moral law would demand that he make a *profession* at precisely that time when he entered upon the service of the true God. But that was the time when he gave himself up to God. To have placed profession after that time would have been to prolong an old wrong. Thus, profession was morally demanded at the time of Abraham's self-surrender. This great mental step was of precisely the nature that in all ages has called for external embodiment. It was a divine-human greeting, and it was the entrance into a new relation. Such acts have in all ages called for physical embodiment. The handshake, the kiss of greeting, the affectionate embrace, etc., fulfill the purpose in ordinary social

life; while marriage, naturalization, etc., supply the need in the more weighty matters of entering into a new relation. And, with all the force that these are needed, Abraham needed such an act at that time. Moral and spiritual laws therefore demanded that some act of the nature of Christian baptism should take place at precisely the time of Abraham's self-surrender, and form the embodiment of that spiritual act. Some such act did take place at that time, or moral law was violated and spiritual instincts were defrauded of their just due. This fact explains completely why no such act should be found at the time of Abraham's simple act of trust spoken of in Gen. xv. It would be out of place there; it was demanded here, and we know of no reason to doubt that some such act really took place at this point. So far all is clear; but how will this explain why baptism should be the physical embodiment of the faith that is reckoned for righteousness, when it certainly was not so with Abraham? Just this way: Abraham's self-surrender and this faith were separated by many years, and the act of profession must, according to its nature, cling to the surrender; but the self-surrender and the possessive trust come together in Christian conversion and take place as practically one act, so that when baptism, according to the demands of moral and spiritual law, forms an investiture of the self-surrender, it embraces the new-born trust also. As the beginning of the possessive trust of the Christian life, baptism is not demanded; as an investiture of the soul's self-surrender, it is. Thus, the shortening of the perspective in Christian conversion, bringing two spiritual steps together, explains completely this seeming discrepancy. The day should be past for

fanciful interpretations of Scripture. It is our duty to view isolated facts in the light of spiritual history, and when we do so, no far-fetched efforts are needed to explain away difficulties, for they vanish of themselves. This brings us to another question.

6. Some fourteen years later, Abraham received a command that he, his boy Ishmael, and all his male servants should be circumcised. What was the purpose of this? It has been held by some that this circumcision occupied the place and fulfilled the office that baptism now fills in the Christian economy. As the Scriptures nowhere say this, it is inferred from a supposed similarity of position and office. Is this correct? We have seen that there was a time in Abraham's unwritten history when an act corresponding to baptism as an act of profession was demanded. That time was when, having determined to serve God, he surrendered himself to God and entered upon his service. If Abraham did this, he did what he should do; if not, he violated a moral law. In the apostolic age, when men reached this point in their spiritual history, the apostles baptized them, and they never did so at any other time. Whatever took the place of baptism with Abraham was called for at that time, and no other. We may go further and say that Abraham *did* take some such step at or near that time. We know this because we find him in after life living *before others* as a professed worshiper of God. There was a time when he began to do this, and some act by which he did it. By some means he made a profession and entered upon the new life. Was the means chosen well fitted to the purpose? We do not know. Whether well or ill, it served the purpose, and that thing was done which it is now the office of

baptism to accomplish. This act, whatever it was, occupied the place of baptism. If it came at the precise time of Abraham's surrender to God, well; if it came after that time, a moral law was violated. What it concerns us to know is, that he *did* it. Now baptism, because of the position it occupies and the service it performs, is not subject to repetition. As a child can never reach the age of twelve but once, so the spiritual history of any man can never reach the period of baptism but once. Any act which stands in the place of baptism and serves its purpose, can never, therefore, be required but once. The thing it was designed to do, has been done once for all. As Abraham had taken this step, there never occurred in his after life a demand for such a step again, and no act which he might perform could be in the place of baptism. To take a different view is to bring confusion into this entire spiritual history. The place of baptism is fixed by moral and spiritual laws, and ten thousand years hence such an act will be demanded at precisely this point of spiritual history. Thousands of years ago it was so. As long as man is man and God is God, it will be so. An act like baptism will be demanded *at just this point and nowhere else*. If this be true, circumcision could not occupy the place now occupied by Christian baptism.

But circumcision is called "a seal" of Abraham's "righteousness of faith" (Rom. iv. 11), and is not baptism a seal of the Christian's faith? The Scriptures nowhere speak of it as a seal of anything, and it does not possess the nature of a seal. It is a *sign* of something, but a sign and a seal are not the same. A seal is by its nature an *abiding mark*, and a mo-

mentary act is not such a mark.* If an act of profession can be a seal, Abraham already had that seal before his circumcision, since he had, in some way, made a profession. But circumcision was an *abiding mark* of a nature that no *act* can be. There is, however, something in the history of Christian conversion that *is* called a seal, and conforms to the nature of a seal in that it is both a sign and an abiding mark. This is the Holy Spirit placed in the heart (Eph. i. 13; iv. 30) of the convert. It is an evidence of sonship (Gal. iv. 6) as long as it abides, and its absence is an evidence that the professor is no longer Christ's (Rom. viii. 9). The Holy Spirit is bestowed either after baptism or in it. It took place in Christ's baptism immediately after the physical act, and so closely as to form part of one transaction. In either case, the physical act of baptism could not possibly stand in the place of circumcision, though something received in connection with it might. If it be asked whether this close association does not lend some color to the contention that baptism comes in place of circumcision, I answer, not to the truth-seeker. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not baptism. Propinquity may help an unscrupulous disputant to confuse distinctions, but the truth is not for such.

But this leads us to ask another question: What do we mean by the Holy Spirit's coming in the place of circumcision? Is it meant that when Christianity was originated in the mind of its Founder, he placed anything in it to satisfy the fancy of having something answering to circumcision; or that when God

* The Standard Dictionary places acts among the definitions of a seal, but it does so only on the authority of those theologians who claim that baptism is a seal.

instituted circumcision, he did so for the purpose of having something to prefigure the gift of the Holy Spirit, or that the nature of the rite was modified with any such view? There is no ground for any such supposition. The Holy Spirit is given to the Christian convert because he *needs* it, and for no other reason, without any regard to the fact that any such thing as circumcision ever existed. Circumcision served as a seal; it chances that the much-needed Holy Spirit serves as a seal—that is all. There is no more reason for saying that the Holy Spirit comes in place of circumcision, than there is for saying that the seal on the deed of a piece of land comes in place of circumcision. They both act as seals, and in that resemble each other; nothing more. The gift of the Holy Spirit, baptism, and everything else is in Christianity because it is *needed*, and for no other reason. Circumcision was for the purpose of marking off a people in whom the promise to Abraham should be fulfilled. Abraham was chosen to be the father of this favored people because of his distinguishing faith. The establishment of this rite was, therefore, indirectly a compliment—a mark of approval—to his faith; and as it was an abiding mark, it could fitly be called a "seal of his righteousness of faith." But he did not specially need it any more than any other man needs an expression of approval. Had he needed it, the need would have existed sooner than fourteen years after the faith to which it referred took place. The *need* of circumcision came when the boy was about to be born through whom that seed should come, and it was then instituted. Its relation to Abraham's faith was incidental, though it was on that account no less real.

We should not dismiss this head without noticing a passage in Colossians (ch. ii. 10-13) in which circumcision is spoken of in connection with baptism. It reads: "And in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power; in whom ye were also circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he quicken together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses," etc.

Paul had continually to contend with Judaizers, who claimed that his converts should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. How should he meet them? Had there been any rite in Christianity which occupied the place which was occupied by circumcision in the old dispensation, Paul could have at once pointed to it and shown that it fulfilled the purpose of circumcision; but there being no such rite, he seizes upon a symbolical interpretation of circumcision founded in the character of the act as a *cutting off*, and declares that it is fulfilled in the *putting off* of the body of sin in conversion. In Rom. ii. 28,29 he declares that true circumcision is not physical, but spiritual: "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter"; and in this passage (Col. ii. 11) he declares that it is made without hands, thus excluding the possibility of making physical baptism

the Christian representative of circumcision. But he immediately speaks of baptism as though that were the act in which the spiritual putting away of the old life takes place; and in Rom. vi. 2, 3, he definitely locates death to sin, or this severance from the old life, in baptism. Does this not, then, make baptism the representative of circumcision? Not the physical act. It *does* make a spiritual act which takes place in baptism such representative, but distinctly excludes the physical act from any such place by declaring that that which stands for circumcision is done without hands. Physical baptism is the investiture of a spiritual act symbolized by circumcision. But circumcision occupied no such place either with Abraham or his seed. It was to neither the investiture of the spiritual act of "putting off" sin. With Abraham it came many years after his justification, and with his posterity it was performed in infancy many years before such a spiritual act was possible. Circumcision did not serve the purpose nor occupy the place of baptism in the spiritual history of the subjects. They are different acts performed on different subjects for different purposes. Baptism stands in place of that act in Abraham's unwritten history in which he made a profession when he entered upon the service of the living God, and in place of no other.

§2. *Differences between Abraham's Faith and Christian Faith.*

We have thus far considered Abraham's faith only in its correspondences with Christian faith, but it would not be true to say that there are no differences. Let us briefly notice some of these.

1. Christian faith differs from Abraham's faith in its objective content. The object of Abraham's faith

was the true and living God and, specifically, such promises as God made to him. Christian faith embraces all these and more. It is faith not only in God but in Christ as his more perfect manifestation. It includes, therefore, personal trust in Christ as God's son and involves an acceptance of the chief evidences of his sonship, such as his resurrection, etc. Specifically, it embraces the promises that are in Christ Jesus.

2. The work of Christ has effected a profound change in the nature of faith itself. The life of Christ has been to the world a spiritual contagion; and this new vision that came into its history has been the most wonderful thing that has happened to mankind. The cross of Christ has broken the heart of the world. It has been the glad sorrow of nineteen centuries. It has hushed all rollicking joy, which is of the animal, with a sublimer, deeper passion. The gospel story is higher than heroism and sweeter than mother-love, and it moves the heart with a strange power. Thus it comes to pass that Christian faith is the birth of a new passion. It palpitates with love, and it is through love that it works. In its emotional element Abraham's faith did not reach this height. God's goodness to him was not without its effect, and brought him into an attitude of *friendship* with God.* But friendship is a weaker term than love, and Christian love is the highest form of love known to our race.

3. Out of this love grows another fact. Christ's great love could not stop at inviting men to a friendly

*Jas. ii. 23. There is no reason to suppose that this friendship was a mere condescension on the part of God. The friendship was mutual, as the history indicates.

relationship with him, but yearningly called them into the most intimate union—a solidarity of affection which breaks down all lines of separation and brings all into one. Hence his proffer to mankind is that they shall come into union with him, and the faith which accepts this proffer becomes an act of union with Christ. The relation of most men to their deities had been that of subjects to a ruler: Abraham's relation transcended this and became that of friendship with a heavenly Friend; but the Christian relation is the sublime miracle of love realized in complete oneness.

4. Accentuating this, and furnishing it complete support, is another thing peculiar to Christianity—the gift of the Holy Spirit. This belongs to the establishment of the higher and closer relationship brought about by Christ, and is the crowning glory of the Christian dispensation. It makes it a "ministration of the spirit," and this is its distinguishing feature.

These are very great differences, and the question at once arises how this will affect the validity of Paul's argument. The fact that Abraham was justified by faith would furnish no evidence that a faith lacking in any of the essential features of Abraham's faith would be counted for righteousness, but it would be excellent evidence that a faith containing all that Abraham's faith did, and much more, would be accepted.

§3. *Paul's Estimate of this Relation.*

Before leaving Abraham's faith it will be interesting to inquire how far Paul's view of it accords with what we have found. Our means for doing this are limited, since he nowhere enters into a discussion of the

nature of faith, but in his argument in Romans and Galatians is simply concerned with showing that justification is by faith rather than by the works of the law. His references to Abraham's faith, however, serve to show us something of his view regarding its nature.

We have already seen that he regarded that faith that was said to have been counted for righteousness as being *trust*. In speaking of it in Rom. iv. he also recognizes it as *strong* faith and as involving a belief in the miraculous. That he regarded it as *loyal* we cannot question when we consider how strongly he insists on loyalty in Christian faith, preaching everywhere "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." A further indication of his estimate of Abraham's faith is to be found in a difference of terms by which he designates Abraham's faith and that of Christian conversion. Speaking of Christian faith in his letter to the Galatians (ch. ii. 16), he says: "Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on (πιστεύειν εἰς) Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law."

Winer defines πιστεύειν εἰς with the accusative of the person, as "in faith to resign one's self *unto* any one, to profess one's self a believer *on* one, *fide se ad aliquem applicare*" (in faith to unite one's self to any one).* Thayer's *Lexicon* defines the phrase as "*to have faith directed unto, believing* or *in faith to give one's self up to* Jesus, etc."†

*Winer's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*. §31, 5.

†Thayer's *N. T. Greek Lexicon, sub voce*. We shall have occasion to give this phrase an independent examination further on. Here, however, it will be sufficient to refer to these standard authorities.

Both these definitions contain the element of surrender to Christ, and this is the believing which Paul declares to be the condition of justification. We have already quoted Cremer's *Lexicon* as saying that "with Paul the element of unreserved trust occupies the first place, with the signification 'unreservedly, without demur of word or act, to give one's self up to the God of our salvation.'"

Thus Paul understands that the faith of conversion embraces self-surrender, or a giving of one's self up to Christ. But he does not speak of Abraham's faith in any such way. When speaking of the faith that was reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness, he simply says: "And Abraham believed God (πιστεύειν τινί) and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3). Now, this πιστεύειν τινί means simply *trust*. Winer defines it as: "*credere, confidere aliqui*" (to trust, to confide in any one).* Thayer's *Lexicon* gives it as simply, "*to trust* . . . God promising a thing." There is nothing in this phrase expressive of self-surrender; it means simply trust, and does not, like πιστεύειν εἰς τινά, represent an act which embraces both surrender and trust. But what is still more striking is the fact that Paul, in the *same connection*, designates Abraham's faith and that of the Christian convert by terms expressive of different acts. In Rom. iv. 3 he says: "Abraham believed God (πιστεύειν τινί), and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness," and then proceeds to say: "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth ON him (πιστεύειν ἐπὶ τινά) that justifieth the

*Winer's *Grammar*, §31, 5.

ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." To the phrase πιστεύειν ἐπὶ τινά Winer gives the same definition as to πιστεύειν εἰς τινά, and it will be seen, when we come to examine these phrases, that they are but different forms expressive of the same act. Paul, when arguing from Abraham's faith to the faith of conversion, designates them by terms having a different meaning. He also has occasion to speak of the faith of conversion again in the 24th verse of this same chapter, and designates it by the same term (πισεύειν ἐπὶ τινά), while he refers again to Abraham's faith in Gal. iii. 6, designating it, precisely as he does here, by the phrase πιστεύειν τινί? These different designations occur side by side, and in an argument which would incline Paul to use either the same term or terms having an equivalent meaning, and they can hardly be accidental. It seems plain, therefore, that Paul did not recognize Abraham's faith to which he refers as containing self-surrender, while he certainly did recognize this element in the faith of conversion; and in these respects his language is precisely in accord with what we have discovered regarding both. But this fact has a further significance. We cannot for a moment suppose that Paul would teach that any one could be justified who was not loyal to God; but it is the office of repentance to make one loyal, and repentance necessarily issues in self-surrender. Thus Paul must have recognized that Abraham repented and surrendered himself to God *sometime*. But he does not find self-surrender in the act of believing which he refers to as having been counted to Abraham for righteousness. Unless Abraham was justified before repentance and self-surrender, therefore, these mental acts must have taken place *before* that

time. This is precisely what we have found by an examination of the case. Paul's language is consistent with no other view; and we find that, in so far as his language throws light on the question, his view was that advocated in these pages.

PART II

THE SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE REGARDING THE NATURE OF FAITH AND ITS RELATION TO BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL ACT DENOTED BY "FAITH"? AND WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

§1. *Faith according to Christ, according to John, and according to Paul.*

Our argument on the nature of faith and its relation to baptism has thus far been mainly philosophical. We now proceed to examine the Scripture teaching on this subject. First, let us inquire what is the nature of that faith which is made the great condition of Christian salvation. We can best do this by viewing it at its origin.

Personal faith in Christ began during Christ's earthly ministry; and no examination of its nature and relationship can be satisfactory which shall fail to view it at that stage of its history. It is there that we not only see it in its beginnings, but find the utterances of Christ himself regarding it; and it was these teachings of the Master which gave to the apostles their conception of faith. Inasmuch, therefore, as the apostles nowhere give an elaborate definition of faith, these teachings become of the highest importance in enabling us to understand their language on this subject. What faith meant with

Christ it meant with the apostles, in its specifically Christian sense.

Among the terms by which faith is designated, there is one phrase which, by reason both of its limiting character and of its frequent use, specially claims our attention. It is πιστεύειν εἰς with an accusative of the person—to "believe *on*" Christ, "*on* him," "*on* me," etc. It is evident at a glance that, whatever may be the meaning of this phrase, it applies to *personal* faith. The action of the verb "believe" terminates on a *person*, not on simple facts or truths. The phrase is a designation of personal faith in Christ. It is used a great number of times in the New Testament, and by different writers. It is found more than thirty times in the Gospel of John, and is used also by Peter (Acts x. 43), by Paul (Acts xix. 4 and Gal. ii. 16), and often by Christ himself: or, at least, its equivalent in the vernacular in which he spoke. It was the familiar form for designating personal faith in Christ.*

What, then, is the sense in which this phrase was used in this early stage of its history?

Christ says in John vi. 35: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on (εἰς) me shall never thirst." We have here, of course, a case of parallelism, and, according to Winer, of synonymous parallelism, in which the two parallel clauses express the same thought in

*Buttmann, having said that *pisteuein* was often used in a decidedly different sense after the introduction of the new religion, from that which it formerly bore, proceeds to say regarding the phrase *pisteuein eis tina*, that "the word [*pisteuein*] in this new sense, when connected with nouns, gradually settled upon this construction."—*Grammar of New Testament Greek*. See pp. 173, 174. This, therefore, was the common designation of this personal faith.

different language. If we examine the last term of each clause, we shall readily see that this is so. The "hunger" and the "thirst" are but different figures expressive of the want of spiritual nourishment; and this points to a similar relation of the two first terms. As hunger and thirst are but different ways of expressing the same thing, so *coming to* Christ and *believing on* him are but different descriptions of the same act. What is involved in coming to Christ he himself informs us in another place. In Luke xiv. 26, he says: "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." There can be no acceptable coming to Christ which does not involve all this—the most complete self-surrender and devotement to him. This, then, is implied in the act of *believing on* him.

But the passage in John vi. 35, has other information for us. The first clause of the couplet declares that "he that cometh to me [Jesus] shall not hunger." When a man is hungry, what does he do that he may cease to be hungry? He eats. Eating, therefore, implied in this physical comparison, corresponds to *coming to* Christ. Coming to Christ accomplishes spiritually what eating accomplishes in the physical sense. The same is true of believing on Christ and the slaking of thirst; for it is said, "He that believeth on me shall never thirst." What drinking is to the thirsty, that believing on Jesus is said to be to the spiritually famished. If it be questioned whether *coming to* Christ can strictly be held to represent eating, and believing on him, drinking, it is most certain that the statements "shall not

hunger" and "shall never thirst" can mean no less than that the man who comes to Christ, or believes on him, comes into possession of the food supply, so that he may partake of it at will. But this is *appropriation*. And if coming to Christ and believing on him *do* correspond respectively to eating and drinking, the other meaning will still not be excluded; for be it observed that the second clause reads: "He that believeth on me shall NEVER thirst." The attainment, therefore, is not simply a single slaking of thirst, but a coming into possession of the boundless stores of the divine grace. It is, in short, the appropriation of the blessings of salvation. The language teaches that he who believes on Jesus thereby comes into possession of these blessings.

The passage has still other light for us; for, what is this bread that is spiritually eaten by those coming to or believing on Jesus? Christ says in the same verse, "I am the bread of life." To come to Christ, or believe on him, therefore, is to appropriate him as our source of life—to come into a vital relation to him. Jesus then proceeds to elaborate this thought much further, during which he says (v. 57), "He that eateth me he also shall live because of me." This faith, therefore, is an appropriation of *Christ*. In verse 47, referring to this same faith, he says, "He that believeth hath eternal life." The appropriation is, therefore, also an appropriation of *life*.

Jesus' language was misunderstood and caused many of his disciples to stumble. He therefore explains his meaning as not referring to the eating of his flesh, and says, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing;" and then proceeds to say, "the words that I have spoken unto you are

spirit, and are life''* What does this mean? Are we to understand that all Jesus has meant by these strong representations of eating him, etc., was the simple act of believing his words to be true? Has the mountain labored and brought forth a mouse? Such a view would empty all these intensely personal representations of their meaning; nor is it true that such a believing would be a *coming to* Christ, for men may believe Christ's words without coming to him. If, however, the eating of Christ's words embraces all that the hearty acceptance of them implies, it means all that I have claimed for faith. There are no stronger representations of personal appropriation and vital connection with Christ in the New Testament, than are found in the language of this chapter. The faith is *personal* faith, not the mere belief of words, and the appropriation is an appropriation of *Christ* and his *salvation*. To believe on Jesus is, never to thirst; it is to come into possession of the source of all spiritual blessings.

Passing to another passage (Jn. iii. 36), we read: "He that believeth on [εἰς] the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.'' Here believing on Jesus is placed in antithesis to not obeying him. To believe on him is the opposite of disobedience. A moment's reflection must make it clear that believing on the Son here is made to embrace obedience, surrender. Did it not do so, the statement would be untrue. If the believing embraced anything less than obedience, it would not

*It is well to note that, according to the Revised Version, the "spirit" here spoken of, is not the Holy Spirit, the word "spirit" is not capitalized.

bring life, since the second statement informs us that the lack of obedience will cut off from life, and expose to the wrath of God.

In Jn. i. 11, 12, we have this language: "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name." Here, receiving Christ and believing on his name are used as different designations of the same act. To *believe on* (*eis*) Christ is to *receive* him, and thus faith becomes appropriative. But does not the fact that those who believe on him simply have the right to *become* children of God indicate that still another step (or other steps) is to be taken before such sonship can be gained? It would be so if becoming a child of God were wholly the act of the convert. But such is not the case. The act of becoming sons, or children, of God has its divine part, which is well represented by Paul as an "adoption," and is wholly a divine act, performed after the candidate has complied with the condition which entitles him to it.* The word used by John

*This conception is not foreign to John's thought, although he does not use the word *adoption*. In 1 Jn. iii. 1 he says: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God." This is what is done in adoption—admission to the rank and privileges of children. The right or privilege to receive this high distinction is doubtless what John refers to in the words under consideration.

It should be remembered that neither faith, nor any other act on man's part can of itself put him in possession of salvation, or justification, or divine sonship. These are acts which are performed by God himself. All we can do is to comply with certain conditions, in view of which God grants these blessings. So far as our agency is concerned, faith appropriates and puts us in possession of these blessings, but it is only as God meets us in the act, and confers the blessing. All that we can do only *entitles* us to receive the favor. John elsewhere speaks of faith as appropriative and possessive, and this statement differs from the others

in this passage means *to become, to be made* children of God, not to make themselves children of God by some further act. This faith admits the believer to adoption.

Of course, this faith, this appropriative spiritual act, must take place under the divinely appointed conditions. What these are, will appear later. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to perform the human spiritual part in becoming a child of God.

It may be well to remark in passing, that this phrase —πιστεύειν εἰς τινα—has two derivative senses, growing out of the one already indicated. In Mt. xviii. 6 Christ says: "But whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on [εἰς] me to stumble it were profitable for him," etc. Here believing on Jesus does not refer to the act of coming to him, of surrendering to him, of receiving him, etc., but to the *continuance* of the loyalty and trust, or adherence, which began in that act. It is the prolongation of the original act into the succeeding life. This is a perfectly natural modification of the meaning of the phrase, and can cause no confusion, since it cannot possibly be applied to conversion.

An example of the other derivative use of this phrase will be found in Jn. ii. 11. The historian says: "This beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana of

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only in recognizing the divine agency which is always present, and without which neither faith nor anything else could be appropriative.

Prof. Geo. B. Stevens says, regarding this passage: "But the word *exousia* here is best taken, not as referring to a mere future *possibility* which faith opens, but as emphasizing the loftiness of the privilege of becoming sons of God which is accorded to believers." And again: "Faith, therefore, does not merely make sonship to God possible; it is the actual entrance into the relation of sonship so far as man has to do with constituting that relation."—*Johannine Theology*, pp. 251, 252.

Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him." Here it is declared that those who had already believed on Jesus, or become his disciples, again believed on him. We have here what may be called an *intensive* meaning, which in the nature of the case cannot embrace all that was involved in the first act. These disciples did not *come to* him, and did not *receive* him, in this second act, because in the nature of the case these steps could not be repeated; but this believing on him implied all that had preceded, and further deepened its meaning. The situation calling for this use of the phrase was peculiar, and grew out of an exceptional condition during Christ's personal ministry. This ministry was a period of progressive self-disclosure on the part of Jesus. It was a rising of the sun, with its early foregleams, its subsequent appearance above the horizon, its struggle through obscuring clouds, and, at last, its resplendent shining in the heavens. Not until the sixteenth chapter of Matthew do we learn that even his most intimate disciples believed in his divinity and Messiahship. Those who accepted him in one character might soon be called upon to acknowledge him in a higher. Thus, the disciples who had previously believed on him were led to believe on him in a higher sense when they witnessed the miracle at Cana. Not until Jesus' exaltation to heaven could faith reach its highest content, and accredit him for all that he was. This derivative use of the phrase is also perfectly natural, and can occasion no confusion, since it cannot apply to those who have never before believed on Jesus.

It may be added that there is also a lower or partial sense in which this phrase is sometimes used. This

tendency runs throughout language. Even such words as *round*, *straight*, *true*, *perfect*, are often used below their absolute sense, and may therefore take degrees of comparison, such as *rounder*, *straighter*, *truer*, *more perfect*. When we desire to speak of some object, act, or quality which possesses some of the elements of another object, or possesses its qualities in some degree, poverty of language often constrains us to use the name of that object or quality to express our thought. This lower use of a term does not destroy its higher meaning, and the context must determine which meaning is intended in any particular case. Such a use of the phrase πιστεύειν εἰς is found in Jn. xii. 42: "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God." They credited Jesus' claims and, no doubt, were in sympathy with him, but they did not *come to* him, *obey* him, nor *receive* him. They did not believe on him in an acceptable sense, for their course is spoken of with disapproval. Their faith fell short of the essential element of self-surrender. It did not, like the believing on him spoken of in Jn. iii. 36, put them in possession of eternal life.

In the light of this examination it appears that the phrase to *believe on* (πιστεύειν εἰς) Christ, represents the spiritual act of *coming to* him, *receiving* him, *submitting to* or *obeying* him. It embraces self-surrender, acceptance, trust. We may go further and say that, since it is the act of acceptably coming to him and receiving him, all the spiritual characteristics which Christ attaches to the condition of divine acceptance, throughout his entire teaching, are but

features of this faith. It has within it all that the heart must contain when it comes to God, and it is the act of laying all this on his altar.

With these findings the best modern scholarship is in full accord. According to Thayer's *N. T. Lexicon*, faith in Christ includes "obedience to Christ"; according to Cremer, it includes "a self-surrendering fellowship [adhesion]"; while Winer defines it as including, "in faith to resign one's self *unto*" Christ, and, "to unite one's self to" him ("*fide se ad aliquem applicare*"). Thayer's *Lexicon* also defines the phrase πιστεύειν εἰς τον Ἰησουν as, "*to have a faith directed unto, believing* or *in faith to give one's self up to* Jesus." Prof. Stevens, after referring to the passages above considered, concludes: "It is impossible that such functions and effects should be ascribed to any faith which is not in its very nature a trustful surrender of the soul to Christ, a self-renouncing acceptance of his person, and an entrance into life-fellowship with him."*

Such is the meaning of faith as described by the most characteristic phrase representing it in the apostolic age. It is an appropriation of Christ and his salvation; it is obedience, or surrender to him; it is the spiritual act of entering into union with him. In describing the faith that justifies, Paul uses this phrase. Did he use it in a similar sense?

In Gal. ii. 16 he says: "Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on [εἰς] Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ." And then he says in the next verse: "But if, while

* *The Johannine Theology*, p. 233.

we sought to be justified in Christ," etc. When these persons "believed on Christ Jesus" that they "might be justified by faith in Christ," they "sought to be justified *in* Christ." To believe on (εἰς) Christ, therefore, is to enter into him.* It is the spiritual act of union with Christ.

In Phil. iii. 8, 9 Paul says: "I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law; but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." This righteousness of God (ἐκ, *from*, "which comes from God"†) by faith (ἐπὶ, *upon* faith, upon our believing on Christ) is God's accounting us righteous in view of our faith,‡ and is equivalent to justification. And this righteousness (justification) through faith is spoken of as being equivalent to being "found in him" (Christ). To have this righteousness is to be in Christ. This faith is the act which places us in that relation.

In Gal. ii. 20 Paul says: "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God." Paul still lives after his crucifixion

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*Commenting on this passage, Ellicott says: "In the formula *pisteuein eis* with acc.—less usual in St. Paul, but very common in St. John—the preposition retains its proper force [*into*], and marks not the mere direction of the belief (or object *towards* which), but the more strictly theological ideas of *union* and *incorporation with*."—Ellicott's *Commentary on Galatians, in loc.* Thus, while it may not be good English, the thought is that of *believing* INTO Christ.

† Thayer's *Lexicon, sub dikaiosunee.*

‡ Ibid.

with Christ, but it is no longer the old self-life, but Christ living in him, and his life is now a life in faith, faith in the Son of God. To live in faith, then, is to have Christ live in us; and thus faith puts us into union with Christ.

Perhaps we may add also the statement of II. Cor. v. 21, where Paul speaks of those who are being reconciled to God as becoming the "righteousness [justified ones*] of God in him" (Christ), thus placing justification in Christ, into whom faith must bring us in order to reach it.

Paul's teachings therefore accord with those in John in making the faith of salvation an act of appropriation and union with Christ.

We have in these descriptions of faith a mental act of that class which in all ages has been wont to take place in some external act of expression. It is a *social* act. Surrender to another and entrance into union with another are necessarily social. It is a divine-human greeting under conditions involving the most intense feeling. At such times the heart must break silence, and scorns even words. It is the prodigal's self-surrender. There should be the embrace and kiss of absolution and other acts of reinstatement. If there had been no outstretched arms, the prodigal would have fallen on his knees, or prostrated himself on the ground. The heart must have its own. If there be strong feeling, there will be a desire for some act at this point in conversion. An act appointed by the Redeemer would be more precious to the heart than any which the convert might himself select. Christ has appointed such an

*Thayer's *N. T. Lexicon, sub voce.*

act—baptism. It fulfills purposes of even wider importance. Kneeling in the closet does not stop a sin which is still being perpetuated against the Redeemer; *profession* does stop it. It also measures the faith that is being offered for acceptance that the heart may know that it is sufficient. This faith is not only an act of self-surrender, but also the mental act of union with Christ; it is the soul's marriage to the Redeemer. The mental act of giving and taking in marriage has its investiture. There are gravest reasons why it should be so. This faith should also have investiture. And we shall see that it has.

§2. *Paul Places this Spiritual Act in Baptism.*

Paul's doctrine of justification by faith was liable to misapprehension. To teach that a man might be justified by faith without the works of the law would seem to weaken the sanctions of law; and to claim, as Paul did, that man's sin had caused a wonderful manifestation of divine grace, so that "where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly," would seem to put a premium on sin, and raise the question, Why not "continue in sin that grace may abound"? Paul's true answer to this would be, "Because there are elements in this faith that put such a course out of the question." Paul does make this answer, but he affirms all this of the spiritual element in baptism. He represents baptism as embracing a two-sided spiritual transaction—human and divine; and finds in the nature of this a conclusive reason against continuance in sin. This transaction on its human side is faith; on its divine side absolution, and the divine indwelling; in its combined aspect, union with Christ.

He undertakes to show his readers, in Rom. vi,

that they have "died to sin," and he deduces this from the fact that they have been baptized into Christ. "Or are ye ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (v. 3). In v. 5 he says, "For if we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection." Thus men are said to enter "into Christ" and to be "united with him" in baptism. But being in Christ is a spiritual relation, and cannot be reached by any merely physical act. There must be in baptism, therefore, the spiritual act of entering into union with Christ. But this is faith.

But Paul declares that in entering into union with Christ his readers had "died to sin," and he accordingly places this in baptism also. In v. 2 he says: "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" and then says (v. 3), "Or are ye ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized in his death?" The language of v. 2 is not "we who *have died*," but "we who *died*." The aorist tense points to an event occurring at some definite time, and v. 3 fixes that time as at baptism.

Now, what is meant by dying to sin? The phrase is a metaphor expressive of separation from sin, or as complete severance from it as possible. When did this take place? Some may say, in repentance; but was this Paul's idea? In repentance there is a cessation of the love of sin and a purpose not to continue its practice; but this is not death to sin, with Paul. He connects death to sin with our entering into union with Christ (v. 3); but we enter into union with Christ not by repentance, but by faith. In chapter vii. Paul describes the case of a man who is intensely

loyal to right and striving to do it with an earnestness that makes the struggle tragic, but fails; and then the cry goes up, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" The answer is, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is the work of repentance to make the heart loyal to right, and the case here described has that loyalty in a very high degree, yet sin still has the mastery. There is no severance from it. Severance comes through some kind of connection with Christ. It is not Paul's idea that death to sin comes through repentance, but through union with Christ. Repentance is certainly a condition of its taking place, but the case is too serious to be disposed of in that way. Paul's image is that of a dead body, which, though loathed, as sin may come to be in repentance, cannot be escaped from. There can be no severance from the power of sin without help. This help comes through union with Christ; and there can be no breaking with sin, or death to it, worthy of the name that falls short of laying hold on that Power through which alone rescue can come. But this is *faith*. The penitent dies to sin when he enters into Christ. Paul's whole theology hinges on the fact that the penitent must have help, or he is lost. For this reason he must also unite with Christ's other self, the church, the other great saving power of Christianity. In his connection with these forces lies his salvation. He unites with these in baptism; and if the case be as serious as Paul represents it, nothing short of this can constitute death to sin.

There is another reason why death to sin cannot be said to take place in repentance. Many forms of sin have a self-perpetuating character, and one of these

forms, ever present, can only be terminated by profession. As there can be no severance from sin while we are perpetuating it, profession becomes one of the elements in death to sin; and as baptism is the great act of Christian profession, death to sin is not consummated before it.

Thus far Paul has spoken of baptism as containing a spiritual element which answers to the act of believing *on* (or *into*) Christ, both as defined by Christ himself, and, as understood by Paul.* In v. 7 he takes another step. Vv. 6 and 7 read: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin." Thus, not only death to sin, but justification also, is placed in baptism.

Paul's argument, therefore, is, that in baptism his readers entered into union with Christ (faith), that in this act they died to sin, and that, having died to sin, they were also justified from sin. Thus he places both faith and justification in baptism. The same thought appears under another form in v. 3, where those who are "baptized into Christ" are said to be "baptized into his death," where they come into contact with the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin. Speaking of this passage, Prof. Sanday says: "The sprinkling of the blood of Christ seals that

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* Neander says: "Faith is the spiritual act by virtue of which, in surrendering ourselves to him who died for us, we die to a life of sin, to the world, to ourselves, to all which we were before, and rise again in his fellowship, in the power of his Spirit, to a new life devoted to him and animated by him."—*Planting and Training*, Bohn ed. i. p. 459; Am. ed. p. 419.

covenant with His people to which baptism admits them."*

Thus Paul in most positive language places union with Christ, death to sin, and justification in baptism. Does he literally mean this, or is he speaking figuratively of spiritual events which have really preceded baptism, but are formally represented by it? There are no intimations of any such course, and there is nothing in the nature of these spiritual acts which could prevent their taking place in baptism. In a word, there are no reasons for supposing that his very positive language means anything else than what it says. To interpret language figuratively without reason, is in effect to cancel all literature. There are, on the other hand, important reasons, moral, practical, and spiritual, why these spiritual acts should take place in a physical act like baptism.

Prof. Sanday paraphrases the first part of Paul's language in this chapter, thus: "Surely you do not need reminding that all of us who were immersed or baptized, as our Christian phrase runs, 'into Christ,' *i. e.*, into the closest allegiance and adhesion to him, were immersed or baptized into a special relation to his *death*. I mean that the Christian, at his baptism, not only professes obedience to Christ, but enters into a relation to him so intimate that it may be described as an actual union,"† etc. Commenting on this language later, he speaks of "the mystical union of the Christian with Christ, dating from his baptism."‡ He also places being crucified with Christ in baptism;§ and further on says: "In baptism the

* *International Critical Commentary* on Romans, p. 155.
† Ibid., p. 154. ‡ Ibid., p. 156. § Ibid., p. 158.

Christian died to his *old self*, to all that he had been, whether Jew or Gentile, before he became a Christian.*

But there is other evidence on this subject of a more positive character. We have seen from chapter vii. that, however earnest the effort, it is impossible for us to overcome sin by ourselves, and that release from its power can come only through Christ. We are also taught in this sixth chapter that in order to this end we must stand in a certain relation to Christ, known as being *in him*, or vitally united to him; but we have not yet learned what there is in this relation to make it potent to such a result. What, then, is involved in being in Christ? What does it mean to be in him?

Christ has spoken of this relation as a mutual indwelling—we in him and he in us—and declared that apart from it we "can do nothing" (Jn. xv. 5). The nature of the relation he has illustrated by the vital connection between the branch and the vine, so that the branch lives in the vine. A similar relation is sustained by a limb or any part of the human body to the body itself. It is filled by the spirit or animating principle of the body, and is able to resist, as long as the body lives, the influences that would speedily produce putrefaction, were it not vitalized by this principle. A further application may be seen in the food that we eat, which, after undergoing a process of digestion, passes into the current of the blood and is borne to those parts needing repair, where, taking its place as part of the tissues of the body, it instantly becomes alive—is filled with, or im-

**International Critical Commentary* on Romans, p. 163.

mersed in, the spirit which animates the body. If being in Christ involves anything analogous to this, it must certainly be a condition most potent for righteousness. Does it?

Paul answers this question in the eighth chapter of this epistle. After concluding in the seventh chapter that release from the power of sin can be gained only through Christ, he proceeds in the beginning of the eighth to show how this is done. He says (v. 1): "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." What is involved in being in Christ that should cause it to place those who are in him beyond any condemnation? "For the law [power] of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made [not *has* made] me free from the law [power] of sin and of death." To be in Christ, then, is to be in contact with the Spirit of life, whose energizing power breaks the power of sin.* The apostle is not speaking of a progressive deliverance from the power of sin, but of something which took place at a definite point of time in the past. Those who are in Christ were made free from the power of sin by virtue of being in him and this was accomplished by the Spirit of life.†

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*Various commentators, including Meyer, connect "in Christ Jesus" in the second verse, with "made me free," with the sense "The Spirit of life made us free as soon as we entered into communion with Christ," but Godet prefers to connect it with "law" (meaning "reign" or "power"). The sense would then be, The *reign* or *power* of the Spirit of life which appertains to being in Christ made me free, etc. Either view gives the thought that being in Christ involves contact with the Holy Spirit.

†"*Aorist.* For it is a historical act, which resulted from the effusion of the Spirit in the heart. The progressive sanctification is the further development and consequence of this act." — Meyer's *Com. in loc.* The "progressive sanctification" to follow is evidence that this freeing from sin was not absolute. It was rather the endowment with power to overcome sin, which in proportion to one's faithfulness would be accomplished. Paul therefore exhorts to such faithfulness (vs. 12, 13).

But what is the nature of this contact with the Spirit which is reached by coming into Christ? "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (v. 9). To be in Christ is to have the Holy Spirit (called also the Spirit of Christ in the next clause) dwell in us. Verse 10 and part of verse 11 read: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you," etc. What is spoken of in verse 10 as Christ's being in us, is spoken of in verse 11 as the Holy Spirit's dwelling in us. Thus, the union described by Christ (Jn. xv.), consisting in our being in him and he in us, is now realized by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is Christ's other self abiding in the world, and his indwelling is Christ's indwelling (Jn. xiv. 16-18). Referring again to the statement in verse 9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,* if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you," we learn that to be "in the Spirit" and to have the Spirit dwell in us are convertible terms, and that it is essential to our being in the Spirit that the Spirit dwell in us. If so, it must also be essential to our being in Christ that Christ shall dwell in *us*. But we have just seen from comparing verses 10 and 11, that Christ's being in us, and the Holy Spirit's dwelling in us are but different expressions of the same fact. It follows, therefore, that it is essential to our being in Christ that the Holy Spirit shall dwell in us. So essential to our being in Christ is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that if any one does not possess the

*Spirit is here written with a capital, both by the A. V. and by the Americam Committee of the R. V.

Spirit, it is declared that he is "none of his" (v. 9). Certainly no one can be in Christ who is disowned by him.

There is another consideration which must not be overlooked. In Rom. vi. 6, 7, freeing from bondage to sin is spoken of as death to sin; but in this chapter we are informed that freeing from bondage to sin —this death to sin—is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit, acting in Christ (v. 2). Thus it appears that while death to sin may in part consist in our laying hold on the saving Power, it is consummated only by the Holy Spirit dwelling in those who are in Christ. This may seem to involve the difficulty that as justification is affirmed only of those who are dead to sin (ch. vi. 7), sanctification by the Holy Spirit precedes justification. But this is not necessarily so. Prof. Stevens regards justification and freeing from the power of sin as one act. "The verdict of acquittal is also the effective realization of an actual deliverance from sin itself."* Again, "There is no such thing as a judicial acquittal which is not also an effective moral deliverance."† And again, "So completely are they [justification and moral renewal] one for the apostle's mind that he can blend the language of the two representations and write: 'He that hath died is justified from sin' " (Rom. vi. 7).‡ That release from the guilt and from the power of sin are blended into one act of deliverance seems not an unnatural rendering of Paul's statements, and thus justification and the beginning of sanctification are made to coincide. Now, as death to sin is brought about by the indwelling of

* *The Theology of the New Testament*, p. 424.
† Ibid., p. 425. ‡ Ibid., p. 424.

the Holy Spirit, and as we die to sin on entering into Christ (ch. vi. 2, 3), it follows that being in Christ involves the indwelling of the Spirit.

From every point of view, therefore, union with Christ embraces the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The bearing of all this becomes apparent when we consider that baptism is a condition of receiving the Holy Spirit. The statement of Peter, when first announcing the gospel on the day of Pentecost, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," (Acts ii. 38), represents the invariable teaching and practice of the apostles throughout the apostolic age. The single miraculous exception, by God himself, in the case of Cornelius (Acts x. 44-46) was for the accomplishment of a particular object,* the occasion for which never returned: and the act was never repeated. Paul's own view of this matter is evident from his statement in Gal. iii. 26, 27, "For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ," compared with that of ch. iv. 6, "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Sonship is attained in baptism, and the Holy Spirit is bestowed *because* of sonship.

If, then, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is essential to union with Christ, and if the Holy Spirit is not

*"The *design* of this extraordinary effusion of the Spirit is, according to v. 45, to be found in this, that all scruples concerning the reception of the Gentiles were to be taken away from the Jewish Christians who were present in addition to Peter, and thereby from the Christians generally."—Meyer, *Com. on Acts, in loco.*

given before baptism, it follows that this union does not take place before baptism; and it also follows that, if union with Christ is consummated in baptism, the Holy Spirit is bestowed, not *after*, but *in*, baptism. We have already seen reason for this view apart from Paul's development of the doctrine of union with Christ in this epistle. In Christ's typical baptism, although the embodiment of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove precluded the possibility of his coming upon Christ during the very act of immersion, it nevertheless followed so closely as to form part of the one transaction. It is also by baptism, together with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that we are saved (Tit. iii. 5, 6); and in the new birth we are "born of water [baptism, with all its high and holy spiritual meanings, on the human side]; and the Spirit" (the gift, outpouring, or baptism of the Holy Spirit, on the divine side); and this is necessary to entering "into the kingdom of God" (Jn. iii. 5). Moreover, it is not in water alone, but also in the Holy Spirit, that we are baptized into the one body of Christ (I Cor. xii. 13). Thus, the convert on entering into Christ, like the particle of matter on taking its place in the tissues of the physical body, is instantly filled with, or immersed in, the Spirit, or life principle, of the body, and this induement is essential to the vital union. This union on its divine side (the bestowment of the Holy Spirit) the Scriptures place, not *before* baptism, but *in* it. Here, therefore, must the spiritual act of entering into union with Christ on its human side also take place. But this act, we have seen, is *faith*. If faith be the act of entering into union with Christ, it takes place in baptism, for it is there that this relation is formed.

Faith, as the act of entering into union with Christ, together with the death to sin which it involves and justification in which it issues, are certainly placed by Paul in baptism.

There is another passage in which Paul places the spiritual act called faith, in baptism. He says in Gal. iii. 26, 27: "For ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.* For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

Let us first note carefully what the language declares, and then endeavor to ascertain its meaning. Paul first makes the statement that these Galatians are all sons of God by faith in Christ. He then justifies this statement by referring to the origin of this relation: "FOR as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." They became sons of God by putting on Christ. When this was done is also stated, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ DID [then] put on Christ." The aorist marks the definite point of time of which he is speaking. If the reading were "HAVE put on Christ" it would refer to the act as having taken place some time before, either in baptism or previous to it; but the word "did" fixes the time of the putting on Christ in baptism.

What, now, is meant by putting on Christ? This is a metaphor representing, under the figure of putting on a garment, some spiritual act. Prof. Sanday says it "is commonly used in the LXX, where it means 'to adopt' or 'take to one's self.' The Christian at his baptism thus 'took to himself' Christ, and

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*I retain the punctuation of the A. V., which is according to the Greek text of Westcott and Hort, and is supported by Winer and Meyer.

sought to grow into full unison and union with him."* Ellicott says that these words imply "a union with Christ."† The meaning therefore is, that these persons had, at their baptism, taken Christ to be their own in a relation of blessed union with him, and had thereby become sons of God through faith in him. But how is this a becoming sons of God through *faith?* We cannot know or understand Paul's connection of thought, until we know what is here meant by "faith." Is it a mere belief of the truth regarding Christ? The language does not exclude this sense. It might be said that having believed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, these people were led to repent of their sins and then submit to Christ and put him on in baptism. All this would be true, but the connection of faith with the becoming sons of God would be remote and mediate rather than direct. But the context does not point to this meaning of faith. The whole chapter shows that Paul is speaking of a faith like that of Abraham. He is discussing the same subject that he discusses in the fourth chapter of Romans, quotes the same language (Gen. xv. 6) in the sixth verse, considers and argues from occurrences in Abraham's history down to this very 27th verse, and then in verse 29 goes on to say that this entering into Christ by faith makes them Abraham's seed, who was the father of the faithful. It is beyond question that the faith referred to is the faith that is reckoned for righteousness. It is what Paul speaks of in the preceding chapter (v. 16) as believing on (εἰς) Christ, which signifies *coming to* him (Jn. vi. 35), *receiving* him (Jn. i. 12), *obeying* him (Jn. iii.

* *The New Testament Com. for English Readers*, p. 448.
† *Ellicott's Commentary, ad loc*

36), and *seeking to be justified in* him, in the very next verse (Gal. ii. 17). But what is all this but putting on Christ? What is *receiving* Christ but *taking him to one's self?* Yet this is precisely what putting on Christ means. To believe on (*eis*) Christ and to put on Christ are but different designations of the same spiritual act. If this be the faith to which Paul refers, the connection of his thought is immediate and obvious. The Galatians were sons of God by faith in Christ because in believing on him they put him on, and this putting him on made them sons of God. Just as surely as Paul is here speaking of the faith that is reckoned for righteousness, so surely does he put that faith in baptism, and the recognition of this fact gives a new force and lucidity to his language.

Our discussion of this passage might close at this point but for one fact: There are many who recognize fully the definition here given of faith and admit that Paul's language places it in baptism, but they believe that it should be interpreted figuratively. They think that this faith—this coming to Christ, putting him on, receiving him, entering into union with him—takes place before baptism, and that baptism is a formal act looking back to it and ceremonially representing it.

Apart from the fact that being in Christ involves the possession of the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit is not given before baptism, there are reasons in the language of this verse why such a position is untenable.

The putting on of Christ must be done either in a spiritual sense or *formally*,—in some *form* that can be so designated. But there is nothing in the physical act of baptism (immersion) that can be called the

putting on of anything, or in any way resembles such an act. If the physical act were the putting on of a garment, it could be properly spoken of as a formal putting on of Christ, but there is nothing in the act of immersion that could suggest such a figure. We must look elsewhere than in the form of the physical act for the meaning of Paul's language. Christ is not put on in a formal sense in baptism. But what is even more decisive is the fact that this putting on of Christ is the act of the candidate. It is something which he does himself, not something done upon him. But he does not perform the physical act of baptism. This is performed by the administrator upon him, and he is wholly passive in it. This putting on of Christ cannot refer to the act of some one else, but to something which he himself does. But he *does nothing physical whatever in baptism.* If it is *he* who puts on Christ, it must be a spiritual act. Baptism with its high spiritual content is the act of three persons. On the part of the administrator, it is immersion of a proper subject for a particular purpose; on the part of God, it is absolution, adoption, the gift of the Spirit; on the part of the candidate, it is self-surrender and putting on Christ (faith). As the reference here is to the candidate's part in baptism, the putting on of Christ *must be* a spiritual act. It cannot be a formal act, because he performs no formal act in baptism, his part being wholly spiritual. In so far as God and the candidate have anything to do with baptism, it is a spiritual union. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ—that is, *receiving* him (Jn. i. 12) and *seeking union* with him (Gal. ii. 16, 17)—takes place in baptism.

This phrase will be found later to possess also a

wider meaning, but that it has this meaning there can be no doubt, and Paul's language clearly places this spiritual act in baptism.

§3. *Peter Places the Same Spiritual Act in Baptism.*

In close connection with the statements of Paul regarding the spiritual nature of baptism should be brought one by the apostle Peter, already referred to in another connection. It will be found in Peter's first epistle, and reads: "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. iii. 21).

This quotation is made from the Revised Version, which gives also instead of the word "interrogation," the alternative marginal reading "inquiry or appeal." The Authorized Version reads "answer," while some good scholars would read, "inquiry of a good conscience after God." Lange's *Commentary* has "asking" or "inquiry," and Thayer's *N. T. Lexicon*, "seeking," while Prof. Stevens, of Yale, prefers to read, "the request (directed) towards God for a good conscience."* The rendering, "answer of a good conscience," is not supported by modern scholarship. The meaning is undoubtedly *asking*, *seeking*, *inquiry*, or *request*.

What, now, does Peter mean by this language? Let us note, first, that he definitely states that baptism *saves* us. So clear and explicit is this statement that any attempt to show that baptism is not in some way a saving act must be illegitimate.

Let us next inquire what is the nature of that salva-

* *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 310.

tion which baptism brings. The Scriptures speak of two salvations—a future salvation, and a present salvation from sin (Mt. i. 21). The salvation here spoken of must be some salvation that is connected with baptism; and what this is Peter informs us in Acts ii. 38, where he says: "Repent and be baptized . . . . unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* This salvation embraces the remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit. But any statement that such a salvation depends on a mere physical act, or that water has any power to take away sin must seem too incredible for belief; and it is this fact that has caused so large a part of modern Christendom to reject baptism as a condition of salvation, and make it a symbolic act pointing back to some spiritual transaction already consummated. But grave difficulties lie in the way of such an interpretation of this passage. Apart from the fact that baptism would not then save us, but only represent something that does save us, no one ever *asks*, *inquires*, or *seeks for* anything which he already has. A formal asking for what has already been asked for and obtained would be unnatural, if not farcical. The nature of the spiritual act, therefore, is not compatible with such an interpretation. Another objection is found in Peter's contrasting of this spiritual act with a physical act. He declares that baptism is not the "putting away of the filth of the flesh," but the "request for a good conscience." The contrast is evidently between what baptism *is* and what it *is not;* not between what it does, and does not, *represent*. The thought is not that baptism does not *represent* some previous cleansing of the flesh, for

*Cf. also Tit. iii. 5, 6.

no washing ever does this. When one washes or bathes his body the washing is not the *symbol* of some previous cleansing, but is *itself* the cleansing. It *accomplishes* the cleansing, does not *represent* it. The question is not, therefore, whether baptism represents some physical act of purifying or represents some spiritual act, but whether it *is* the one or the other; and Peter declares that it saves, not as a physical washing, but as a spiritual act. The force of this contrast makes it certain that Peter is not speaking of what baptism *represents*, but of what it *is*. Thus, Peter meets the difficulty involved in suspending salvation on a mere physical act, not by placing salvation before baptism, but by placing in baptism a spiritual act that may fitly form a condition of salvation.

What we are to understand by a "good conscience" will depend on the rendering of the passage. If we read "the inquiry of a good conscience after God," it will refer to the sincerity of the person seeking God. But it seems more natural to take a "good conscience" in contrast with "the filth of the flesh"; and in this case it becomes, like the latter, an objective genitive, indicating the object sought in baptism. What this is, Peter informs us in Acts ii. 38, when he directs men to repent and be baptized that they may receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. To perform any act for the purpose of attaining any end is to make that act a *seeking* of the end. Peter's language in Acts makes baptism a *seeking* act, the object sought being the remission of sins and gift of the Holy Spirit. But how can this be the seeking of a "good conscience"? It is clear that remission of sins, or absolution, removes the guilt of sin, but if

the seeker does not know that this is done, it will not affect his consciousness; but when the Holy Spirit enters his heart, shedding abroad the sense of the divine love (Rom. v. 5), and filling him with the joy of adoption so that he cries out, "Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6), he feels that all is well. Reliance upon such a mental experience might not be safe apart from an act of obedience, but it is essential to the consciousness of sonship, and is an assurance that our repentance and self-surrender have been genuine.* Thus the convert is freed not only from guilt, but from the sense of guilt; his justification is not only a fact, but a conscious fact. It is thus that in the remission of sins and gift of the Holy Spirit the seeker gains a "good conscience."

As Peter makes baptism a *seeking*, an *asking* for a good conscience, it is plain that on its spiritual side he makes it a *prayer*. He is not alone in this. In Christ's typical baptism, it was while he prayed that the Holy Spirit came upon him and the voice from heaven assured him of sonship (Lk. iii. 21, 22). Paul was commanded to be baptized and wash away his sins, "calling on his [Christ's] name" (Acts xxii. 16). The participle rendered *calling on* is in the middle voice, and has the force of "I call upon (in my behalf)." † It is a prayer of the soul for the blessing of salvation. There is in baptism the heart of a prayer, and physical baptism is its voice. Baptism is an opening of the heart for the divine bless-

*Should any object that these references are not to Peter's own writings, it need only be said that the gift of the Holy Spirit itself, which he promises to all baptized penitents, would, apart from any assurance he might directly convey, be an evidence of divine acceptance.

† Thayer's *Lexicon, sub voce epikaleo.*

ing and an earnest desire directed toward God for absolution and the indwelling of his Spirit.

We are now prepared to ask an important question: What is this spiritual act which Peter places in baptism? It is *faith*, in one of its aspects. With Peter, baptism is the *seeking* of a conscious release from the guilt of sin; with Paul *to believe on* Christ is *to* SEEK *to be justified* in him (Gal. ii. 16, 17). Faith, in one of its aspects, is a seeking for justification, and Peter places this in baptism. Paul, as we have previously seen, places the act of *believing on* Christ in baptism, and this, with him, is equivalent to seeking justification; Peter places this same spiritual act in baptism. This is not all. The element common to the other descriptions of faith which we have mentioned is *appropriation*. To *come to* Christ (Jn. vi. 35), to *partake of* him as food (*vv.* 47-51), to *receive* him (ch. 1. 12), and to *put him on* (Gal. iii. 27), are all acts of appropriation. Now, on a moment's thought, it will be seen that this is just what Peter's asking, or seeking, for a good conscience is. When it is uncertain whether a request will be granted or not, the request is necessarily wholly petitionary, but when there is a definite promise that the thing desired will be granted to the request, the asking becomes a means of *appropriation*. There is such a definite promise regarding the thing asked for in baptism (Acts ii. 38); so that this mental asking becomes an appropriative act. Not only do the conditions of the case make this asking an appropriation, but they require that *all* appropriation shall be an asking. Salvation is of grace (favor), and favors are *asked* for, not *demanded* or simply taken possession of. Pardon is never demanded. All faith that is appro-

priative must be petitionary. The faith that saves must be on its knees.* And this is Peter's spiritual act in baptism. Alas, that we should know faith so ill as not to recognize it in this attitude! It is faith in one of its most beautiful aspects. †

It may now be asked whether Peter regarded this spiritual act which he places in baptism, as being faith. The question is not important, as it concerns only names. So long as he places in baptism that spiritual act by which salvation is appropriated, and which is elsewhere under so many descriptions spoken of as faith, it can make little difference by what name he may choose to call it. But there is reason to believe that Peter regarded this spiritual act either as faith itself, or as forming a constituent element of that faith that obtains salvation. In Acts x. 43, he says that "through his [Christ's] name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." If

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* Waterland, commenting on this passage, says: "Faith *alone* will not ordinarily serve in this case, but it must be a *contracting* faith on man's part, contracting in form corresponding to the federal promises and engagements on God's part."—Waterland *On Justification*, p. 440. This is true. The faith that saves must be a *covenanting* spiritual act, but, in the language of the heart, it is a *suppliant receiving of salvation.*

† Regarding the other rendering which makes Peter's language read, "The inquiry of a good conscience after God," it may be remarked that this modifies the thought somewhat, but does not essentially change the aspect of the case. This "inquiry after God" would not, of course, be a mere act of seeking information about him, but the seeking of a blessed relationship, a union with him, thus still presenting this faith in its appropriative aspect. The passage still assigns to baptism a spiritual element, to which belongs its saving efficacy, and this, of the nature of a humble and suppliant appropriation of Christ's redemption. Even if the rendering were "*answer* of a good conscience," the spiritual element in baptism would still be faith in one of its aspects, viz., self-surrender. It would be the *yes* of the soul to all God requires in the gospel. "Yea, Lord, I give myself to thee."

believing on Christ is the condition of remission of sins, and if salvation, including remission of sins (cf. Acts ii. 38), is made to depend on a spiritual act in baptism (1 Pet. iii. 21), it follows that this believing on Christ must embrace this spiritual act in baptism. If the believing spoken of in Acts x. 43 be taken to include the entire spiritual process of conversion,—belief of the truth, repentance and putting on Christ or entering into union with him,—it will reach its consummation in baptism, and Peter's spiritual element in baptism will be a constituent part of it. Alas for any spiritual process of conversion that does not include the spiritual step that Peter places in baptism! —a humble, suppliant appropriation of Christ and his salvation.

Peter places faith, as the spiritual act of appropriating Christ's salvation, in baptism.

CHAPTER II.

SOME SIDE-LIGHTS.

We have seen that the final spiritual step in conversion belongs to a class of acts which demand physical embodiment, and that there are important reasons, both moral and spiritual, why this act should receive such embodiment. We have seen that the physical act of baptism is admirably fitted to meet this requirement, and that when it stands where the apostles placed it, this spiritual act naturally falls within baptism. We have seen also that both Paul and Peter place it there, and in terms so unequivocal that any attempt to separate the spiritual from the physical involves violence to their language.

We now proceed to show that the placing of the spiritual act represented by baptism *within* baptism, is not an exceptional proceeding, but that it accords perfectly with the nature of all similar acts in Christianity and with the habits of thought of the apostolic age.*

§ *1. The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Day. Sacred Song.*

Let us first consider the Lord's Supper, a sister ordinance instituted by the Lord himself.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper belong to the same class of institutions, commonly designated ordinances.

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* "We must remember also, that in the age and to the thought of St. Paul, the act of faith in the individual which brings him within the range of justification, is inseparably connected with its ratification in baptism."—*International Critical Commentary* on Romans, by Prof. Sanday and Rev. Headlam, p. 123.

They each contain a formal or physical act which stands related to a corresponding spiritual act.* They differ in that the spiritual act in one case is commemorative, in the other transitional. It therefore results that one is to be frequently repeated, while the other is to be performed but once. The external acts also are different, corresponding to the difference of the spiritual acts to which they stand related. In a word, baptism and the Lord's Supper belong to the same class of institutions, but to different varieties under that class. The laws which preside over institutions of this class relate alike to both, and must not be disregarded. Certain of these laws will appear more clearly, if examined in their connection with the Lord's Supper.

In order that we may rightly apprehend the nature of this institution, and the interrelation of its physical and spiritual acts, it is important to note that there are two things to be distinguished—*material symbols* and a *physical act*. The *emblems* of the Lord's Supper point to something not present,—to the broken body and shed blood of our Lord,—and they represent an event far in the past—his violent death. But these emblems do not constitute the celebration of the Lord's Supper; they are only the *means* of its performance. The partaking of the Lord's Supper consists in an *act*—the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine. Now, what does this physical act symbolize? Not Christ's body, not his blood, not

* Baptism naturally represents a burial from the old life and a rising to the new life in Christ—a passing from one life to the other. It therefore represents the final step in conversion, and forms the center of a cluster of spiritual facts, such as are described by Paul and Peter, which are thus also brought within baptism.

his death, but a *spiritual act* on the part of the participant. Of both parts Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me." (I Cor. xi. 24, 25.) The spiritual act is, in the first place, an act of calling into mind and dwelling on Christ's death, and this upon a background, and on a day, representative of his resurrection. The heart feeds on the inspiring, quickening facts of its redemption. The act is also called a "communion" (I Cor. x. 16), and professional, in so far as it shows forth the Lord's death (1 Cor. xi. 26). The physical eating and drinking represent a spiritual eating and drinking, or partaking.

Now, it is essential to the very existence of the Lord's Supper, that the spiritual act shall take place *in* the physical act which represents it, and not simply at some other time. If, under the influence of a sermon vividly portraying the scenes of the crucifixion, a whole congregation are carried back to the foot of the cross, and with melting hearts view the agonies of their Redeemer, and if, with the concluding prayer all hearts ascend to him and seek communion with him in spirit, we have the important elements of the spiritual act belonging to the Lord's Supper; but *this* will not be the Lord's Supper, because the physical act—the eating and drinking of the bread and wine—forms no part of it. Or again, if a body of Christians shall assemble and partake of a social meal, into the *menu* of which bread and wine enter, but without the spiritual act of remembering Christ's death and communing with him, *this* will not be the Lord's Supper. The physical part is here, but the spiritual part is absent, and the mere physical act of partaking of bread and wine cannot constitute the Lord's Supper. Suppose, again, that either under

the influence of a sermon, or in a social meeting, all hearts are carried back to Calvary and up to heaven; and then, a month or so later, a social meal, such as has been described, is partaken of by the same company. They have performed both the spiritual and physical acts of the Lord's Supper; but neither in the inspiring meeting nor in the social meal, nor in them both, in their separate performance, have they partaken of the Lord's Supper; nor can they do so, unless the spiritual act shall take place together with the physical, and constitute its spiritual element.

Further, if the church should assemble and partake of the bread and wine in commemoration of some *other* event than that which is symbolized by the eating and drinking, such, for example, as their own conversion, this would not be the Lord's Supper. It would substitute one spiritual element for another, the act not being performed in memory of Christ's death, but for quite a different purpose.

But finally, suppose that, on passing the bread and wine, each communicant should simply touch the bread, and dip his finger into the wine, and with it make a cross on his forehead, the act might be very impressive, but there would be no eating and drinking, and it would not be a partaking of the Lord's Supper.

I think all persons will agree that any one of these changes would amount to a destruction of the Lord's Supper; and yet, have they not all happened to baptism? With some, the spiritual element only has been retained and the physical discarded. With many, the spiritual act is made to take place alone, while the physical act which represents it also takes place by itself, and is called "a mere outward act";

or this physical act is made to commemorate, or retrospectively represent, the candidate's conversion; and finally, the physical act itself is exchanged for one quite different, both in form and in import.

But our main point for consideration is that of the separation of the spiritual act from the physical act which represents it. This, we have seen, in case of the Lord's Supper, would amount to an annihilation of the ordinance. A spiritual communion in a social meeting, or at family worship, and then, at some other time, eating and drinking bread and wine without any such spiritual accompaniment, would by no one be regarded as constituting the Lord's Supper. Yet it is common thus to separate the physical act of baptism from that which it represents. So important is it that the spiritual act symbolized by the partaking of the elements in the Lord's Supper should be present in the act, that Paul declares that the act, without this, becomes even damnatory. In 1 Cor. xi. 29 he says: "For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body." In this, the twin ordinance to baptism, we see how important it is that the spiritual act shall take place within the physical act representing it, and how indispensable it was regarded by an apostle that it should do so.

Will it be said that baptism and the Lord's Supper differ—that one is an initiatory, and the other a commemorative, act? The difference is admitted, but it still remains to be shown that this difference in any way affects the question of the relation of the spiritual act to its symbolic expression. Marriage is an initiatory act very closely resembling baptism, but the mental act of taking each other as husband

and wife, by the parties, must take place *in* marriage; and so important is it that it should do so that any tampering with it results in nothing less than a grave disaster to society. Were the external act either to be omitted altogether, or made to take place some time after the parties had taken each other as husband and wife and lived together as such, the moral disaster to society would be incalculable. One of the most momentous demands of morality is that the mental and external elements of marriage shall not be separated. To permit clandestine union, and transform the marriage act into a ceremony looking backward to the time when the parties began to live together without marriage, would be to break down its utility, and transform it into a mere plaything. The distinction between baptism and the Lord's Supper as initiatory and commemorative has, therefore, no bearing on the question of the separation of the spiritual and the symbolic in these acts.

We have in the Lord's Supper a strong side-light, revealing the views of the apostles regarding the relation of the spiritual and the symbolic in institutions of this kind.

The Lord's Day is not an act, but a portion of time set apart for commemorative and religious purposes; and, therefore, is so far removed from the nature of religious symbolic *acts* as to have no very close bearing on the question we are considering. But regarding this, even, it may be remarked that it can only be honored by being made a season wherein acts of spiritual and religious devotion take place. It must contain *within itself* a spiritual element,—spiritual acts,—or cease to be the Lord's Day in any real sense.

Perhaps we are hardly warranted in referring to

what Paul says in 1 Cor. xiv. 15 as bearing on this question, since the singing and praying "with the spirit" there mentioned may be regarded as referring to the ecstatic exaltation connected with the miraculous gift of tongues; but there are none who will for a moment question that the apostles must have required that both prayer and religious song should contain *within* them spiritual acts of worship, and that when the vocalism ceased to be the investiture of acts of the heart, it became unworthy.

§ 2. *Baptism unto Repentance.*

The severance of baptism from its spiritual element has had the effect to render obscure and difficult one of the most happily expressive passages of the New Testament. John the Baptist, in his address to the multitudes assembled at the Jordan, exclaimed: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire" (Mt. iii. 11). What does this statement regarding baptism "unto repentance" mean? Our ideas of repentance and of baptism are such as to require that repentance shall precede baptism. How, then, can baptism be "unto," or in order to, repentance? Various expedients have been resorted to to relieve this difficulty. One of these has been—assuming that repentance cannot follow, but must precede baptism—to claim that εἰς cannot here mean *unto*, or *in order to*, and that it should be rendered "because of"; and this supposed necessary meaning has been turned to controversial account in support of the claim that the εἰς does not mean *unto*, or *in order to*, in Acts ii. 38, and that baptism "unto (εἰς) remission of sins," there spoken

of, is really baptism *because of* remission of sins.

But a serious objection to this rendering of εἰς in Matt. iii. 11 is that it is not supported by the best scholarship, but is a short and summary dealing with a linguistic difficulty in a seemingly controversial interest. The highest scholarship of the world lends it no sanction.

The Authorized Version reads "unto repentance." So also does the Revised Version, with the concurrence of both the English and the American committees. The American Bible union translation (Baptist) also renders εἰς by "unto." Anderson translates "in order to repentance." So also Dr. Charles Hodge* who says that εἰς here has the meaning of "in order to."

Bloomfield says εἰς here "denotes *purpose*."† Winer says nothing about it, thus indicating that he gives no exceptional meaning to the word εἰς in this passage. Thayer's *New Testament Lexicon* defines John's "baptism of repentance" as being "a baptism binding its subjects to repentance," and gives no such exceptional meaning as *because of* to εἰς in this passage. Lange renders the words "unto repentance," and says that by his baptism in water John "calls them to repentance." Meyer says: "εἰς μετάνοιαν denotes the *telic reference* of the baptism which imposes an obligation to μετάνοια" (repentance).‡

This list need not be extended. Not one of these authorities renders the word εἰς in this passage by *because of*, or by any equivalent term. The writer of this is not aware that any reputable scholar

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Com. on Romans, p. 140. †*Commentary, in loco.*

‡The Peshito (Murdock's translation) reads "unto repentance."

has ventured to incorporate any such rendering of this passage into his translation of the New Testament. It were not easy to find any linguistic question on which the world's foremost scholars are more completely united than in the view that εἰς in this passage means "unto" or "in order to," and that John's baptism was therefore in some sense, not "because of" repentance, but "unto" or "in order to" repentance. Until we are able to show that this consensus of scholarship is wrong, we must accept it and seek some other solution of the difficulty involved. Various other expedients have been resorted to for this purpose.

It has been proposed to read "reformation" instead of "repentance," and refer the meaning to that outward change of life that follows repentance; but μετανοια seems hardly to bear this meaning.

As Webster defines *repentance* as "the act of repenti ng, or the state of being penitent," it has been thought that John's baptism may have introduced its subjects into a *state* of repentance—that is, into a life of penitence. There are several objections to this, one of which is, that the statement of the passage would not then be true. If men must repent *before* baptism, the life of penitence would begin then, and baptism could not therefore introduce them into it. Seeing this difficulty, L. B. Wilkes, in his able work on *Designs of Christian Baptism*, suggests that the meaning may be that baptism introduces us "into formal and visible connection with the cause which John preached, and with the people whom John was making ready for the Lord."* It can hardly

* Page 116.

be claimed that this removes all difficulty, and the author candidly remarks at the beginning of his discussion that the "passage is not without its difficulties." Turn them as we may, it is not easy to draw from John's words a clear and obvious meaning;* and yet we cannot suppose them to have been obscure to his hearers, or to the writer of the gospel. Do we occupy their view-point? May the trouble not lie in some defect in our apprehension of this whole matter? Instead of seeking to bring the language into harmony with our own preconceptions, let us seek by further investigation to ascertain its real meaning. And let us now ask one question: Does repentance (*μετανοια*) always mean in the Scriptures precisely the same thing? It would be surprising if it did, for both the English word *repent* and the Greek word *μετανοεω* have several meanings. The language of the Scriptures is not philosophical and technical, but popular; and in popular usage words of this class are generally elastic in meaning. To assume that the word *repentance* has but a single cast-iron meaning, and then to seek to apply this meaning to all cases, is to miss our way in the matter of interpretation.

Not only is it antecedently improbable that the word *repentance* (*μετανοια*) has only one meaning in the Scriptures, but there is positive evidence that such is not the fact. It does not lie within the province of this discussion to consider all the senses

* The idea that John baptized impenitent persons for the purpose of binding them to repentance, seems inadmissible. A man may bind himself to change his *conduct*, but not to change his *purpose*, for such an act implies a change of purpose. Nor can he promise to *feel* in a particular way at some future time, for feelings are not summoned at will. Moreover, the people were baptized by John, "confessing their sins"; and unless this confession was hypocritical, it implied a purpose to forsake them.

in which this word is used, but we shall notice two of them.

In II. Cor. vii. 10 we read that "godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Here sorrow and repentance are not the same, but stand to each other as cause and effect. The repentance is not sorrow, but a consequence of it. What it is, it is not necessary now to inquire. It is commonly regarded—and I think rightly—as a change of mind or purpose. The present object is to call attention to the fact that it is here distinguished from godly sorrow. Now, in connection with this, let us consider another fact: There was among the Jews something known as repentance "in sackcloth and ashes." This "sackcloth and ashes" was the great symbol of mourning. To speak of changing one's purpose "in sackcloth and ashes" would be absurd. The change of purpose is necessarily the cause which must lead to the taking of the sackcloth and ashes when that step relates to one's wrong-doing. If we take the view that the taking of "sackcloth and ashes" was a mere profession of something which had gone before, it would still point to that something as a great *sorrow*. Hence we should have another use of the word *repentance*.*

**Metanoeo* here is not to be taken in the sense of *doing penance*. "Sitting in sackcloth and ashes" was not an act of expiation, but an expression of deep humiliation and sorrow for sin. Precisely the same act was wont to be performed as an expression of sorrow, when no sin was being repented of. Our versions read *repent*, not *do penance*, and Meyer gives the meaning of Mt. xi. 21 as: "Even those wicked heathen cities would have been brought to amendment long ago with deep sorrow for their sins." —*Com. in loco.*

But we are not permitted to regard the sackcloth and ashes as merely retrospective of something already past. Christ refers to the practice in Mat. xi. 21 and Luke x. 13. In the latter passage he says: "If the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you [Chorazin and Bethsaida], they would have repented long ago sitting in sackcloth and ashes." No interpretation which is not evacuating can fail to place this repentance in the act of "*sitting* in sackcloth and ashes." The words "repented . . . in sackcloth and ashes" also, in Mat. xi. 21, definitely place the mental act of repenting in its symbolic expression. The mental act is *accompanied* by its physical expression. Does any one doubt that *mourning* in sackcloth and ashes meant mourning while sitting in sackcloth and ashes? Were not all the symbols of mourning -going barefoot and bareheaded, abstaining from anointing the head, from bathing and from conversation, scattering dust and ashes into the air, placing them upon the head, or lying down in them, wearing sackcloth, striking the hands together or tossing them towards the sky, smiting the thigh or breast, fasting, etc.—were not all these accompaniments of the mourning itself? Not only does the language of Christ distinctly place this repentance in the act of "sitting in sackcloth and ashes," but the entire usage of this and other symbols of sorrow shows that they were *accompaniments* of that which they represented. There can be no doubt that Jesus regarded this repentance, whatever its nature might be, as taking place while sitting in sackcloth and ashes; and this sense of the word *repentance* was one of the most familiar to the minds of the

Jewish people. The usage extended back through many centuries and was still extant.*

This repentance was regarded by Jesus as one of the profoundest and most deeply earnest character; and it is with this import that he adds the words "in sackcloth and ashes" when speaking of the supposed repentance of the Tyrians and Sidonians. He recognizes the law that a great and soul-moving repentance would seek some strong expressional embodiment; and thus when speaking of this profoundly earnest repentance, he represents it as taking place in an act of this character. But it must be remembered that the repentance here spoken of cannot be a change of purpose, for this could not take place in the sackcloth and ashes.

Here then, is a repentance, whatever it may be, which was wont to take place *in* sackcloth and ashes. Under the pressure of the divine judgments and the stern rebukes of faithful prophets, the people had again and again been brought to repentance in sackcloth and ashes; and now that here is the last of that illustrious line of prophets thundering his appeals into the ears of the Jewish people, it is likely that that great repentance of the prophets which naturally took place *in* its symbolic expression will obtain here. We cannot be unmindful of what repentance had formerly meant, and had not ceased to mean, on such occasions, without cutting loose from the past and being guilty of an inexcusable anachronism.

What, then, was this repentance which loomed so

*In a footnote to Josephus' Antiquities, Book viii., ch. xiii. §8, Jerome (cited by Ryland) says: "The Jews weep to this day and roll themselves upon sackcloth, in ashes, barefoot, upon such occasions" (referring to the humiliation of Ahab).

large in the minds of the Jewish people at this time, and in preceding ages? What was it that had been wont to take place while "sitting in sackcloth and ashes"?

It has been usual to regard sackcloth and ashes as the great symbol of mourning; and such it was, but not this only. The repentance in sackcloth and ashes, or in sackcloth, or with fasting, was more than mere sorrow. When King Ahab heard of the judgments that God would bring upon him for his wickedness, it is said: "And it came to pass, when Ahab heard these words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah, the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days I will bring the evil upon his house" (1 Kings xxi. 27–29). The most prominent signification here connected with the fasting and sitting in sackcloth and ashes is that of *submission* to God. Ahab "humbled" himself. Nor must we overlook the import of two other words—"before me." God said, "Ahab humbleth himself BEFORE ME." Ahab's act was a Godward act—a *social* act. It was a symbolic utterance to God; it was *submission;* it was *surrender.* His course had been one of rebellion against God. He had done "very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites did," and now this act of humble submission is surrender to God, the surrender of a rebel. It said with a loud voice: "O God, I yield, I submit myself to thee and humble myself in the dust before thee." Here is a clear case of repentance in sackcloth and ashes.

What is it? What is the mental element in Ahab's act? It is not change of purpose, for that necessarily took place before. It is humble submission to God, a mental act of surrender to him, taking place in a symbolic act of expression, called for by the feeling of the heart itself. Repentance in sackcloth and ashes, therefore, was far more than sorrow for sin; it was an act of profound submission to God.

But, profoundly expressive as was this act of itself, the period of sitting in sackcloth and ashes or of fasting, as the case might be, was not always, and perhaps never, passed in unbroken silence. In the account of the repentance of the Ninevites with fasting and sackcloth and ashes, as reported in the third chapter of the Book of Jonah, we read that the people were instructed by the king to "cry mightily unto God" and to "turn every one from his evil way." What the people said in this mighty cry to God, we are not told, but we know that if it had not contained a surrender, their prayer would have frozen on their lips. We need not be told that it contained confession, submission, surrender and pleadings for mercy. But the king bade them also to "turn every one from his evil way." We cannot be sure from the narrative that this turning was regarded as taking place simply *in* this solemn act of submission; but it is certain that this act of profound mourning for sin and surrender to God, itself constituted a most solemn leave-taking of the past and entrance upon a better course. It was a turning.

But what we are left to *infer* in this case is distinctly *stated* in another. In a time of famine and national disaster, Joel exhorts the people, saying: "Yet even now, saith the Lord, turn ye unto me with all

your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping and with mourning: and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God" (Joel ii. 12, 13). Here, in an act of fasting, weeping and mourning, the people were exhorted to *turn to God*. It was this that they were to do, with these accompaniments. The fasting was not to embrace simply weeping and mourning, but pre-eminently a *turning* "unto the Lord." This turning was to be a whole-hearted act, a sincere turning to God.

But what does this mean? Was it simply a change of feelings or of purpose in reference to God? It could not possibly be this, since there would be no fasting or weeping and mourning until after this had taken place. What this turning to the Lord meant, may be learned from another passage.

In II. Chron. xxx. 8, 9, we read: "Now be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers were: but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified forever, and serve the Lord your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you. For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that led them captive, and shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him." The words, "For if ye turn again unto the Lord," at the beginning of the ninth verse, are a reference to what had been described in the preceding verse as a *yielding to God and entrance upon his service*. Let it be observed also, that in the pictorial imagery of the Hebrew, the sense of the word "yield," as given in the margin, is "give the hand." This is expressive of a *social* act—not a mere change

of feelings, but that which follows such a change—the act of surrendering to God, or entering into cordial relations with him.

In view of these examples, the following conclusions are warranted: 1. When repentance was associated with any symbolic act expressive of it, such as sitting in sackcloth and ashes or fasting, it was regarded as taking place *in* the act. 2. The spiritual act which took place in the symbolic act was not simply that of mourning for sin, but also and most emphatically, humble submission, or surrender to God, or, as it is sometimes expressed, turning to God. Of the four cases mentioned, only one—that of Joel—says anything about sorrow, leaving that to be implied; but they all speak of either a humbling before God, or a turning to him. This was the prominent, and, in all cases, indispensable element. 3. We see that the type of the Jewish mind, which was not metaphysical, did not seize predominantly on the mere change of purpose, but fixed its view upon that mental step which immediately succeeds such change of purpose, and necessarily implies it, viz., the fulfilment of that purpose in the spiritual-social act of surrender to God, or submitting oneself to him. This surrender or turning to God was to be with all the heart (Joel ii. 12), and if the sorrow and submission were not genuine, the act was an abomination before God (see Isaiah lviii. 3, 4). This idea of repentance was not less spiritual than the one which prevailed later. It caught the flight of the soul to God, not awing, but rather reaching its goal. The Jew was wont to fix his gaze less prominently on *purposive* than on *factual* repentance. Cremer's *New Testament Greek Lexicon* says that the Hebrew word

"usually employed to denote *moral change or conversion* is in the LXX rendered by ἐπιστρέφειν [to turn], and not by μετανοεῖν," a fact which readily appears on examination of the Septuagint with a Greek concordance. This fact is not without significance. In passing from a life of sin and disobedience to a life of faithful and devout service of God, four mental steps may be involved. There may be (a) a change of opinion or belief, (b) a change of feelings, (c) a change of purpose, and (d) a turning to God, or giving oneself up to him in holy service, resulting from the preceding change of purpose. Now, of these four steps, the verb ἔπιστρέφω points specifically to the last. It *implies* the others, and in a looser sense may be used to embrace them; but it definitely means not only a "turning from a certain state or conduct," but also "a positive entrance upon a certain state or conduct":* and when followed by the words "unto the Lord," it designates a social act graphically described as "giving the hand" to God. When, therefore, repentance was attended by any symbolic act of expression, such as sitting in sackcloth and ashes or fasting, this mental act of turning would most naturally and fitly take place in it, not before it. But let it be distinctly noted, that if this repentance, or turning, had consisted of any of the preceding steps, such as change of purpose or change of feeling, it *could not* have taken place in sackcloth and ashes. This great Jewish repentance, therefore, was *specifically that mental act which* FOLLOWS *change of feeling and purpose*. But it was not merely formal; it was the *real* spiritual act of surrender to God, all

* Cremer's *Lexicon, sub voce.*

that had preceded it being an emotional and purposive change, and not a mental act directed to God. It was not a mere profession. It was a profoundly spiritual act—a contrite giving oneself up to God in holy service, and, if performed in sincerity, a deepening and fortifying of all that had taken place in the initial sorrow and change of purpose. It was a greatening of repentance,—as we now understand that word,—a descent into the depths, a deep, solemn turning from sin to God. It embodied sorrow, contrition for sin, a solemn and impressive leave-taking of the old life, a heartfelt surrender to God, and an entrance in holy consecration upon his service. And this all took place IN (and fitly so) an external act of expression.

The profound spiritual value of such a repentance bears the seal of Christ's own approval when he refers to it (Mt. xi. 21) as the most deeply earnest form of repentance known to the people of his time.

These are the facts regarding the prevailing Jewish conception of repentance. What bearing have they on John's language in Mt. iii. 11? It is certain that if the repentance he preached was connected with a symbolic act, it not only might, from its nature, take place *in* the symbolic act, but this had been the common understanding, and as we learn from the language of Christ already referred to, was still the understanding of the Jewish people regarding such acts. As in hand-shaking the mental act of greeting takes place, and fulfills itself in the physical act, so had repentance been wont to take place in sackcloth and ashes, fasting, etc. But what shall the symbolic act be in this case?

John's message was not one of calamity. It was

not like the doomful proclamation of Jonah, nor, as in Joel, did it have reference to famine and disaster, but it was the announcement of the hope of Israel. It was the foregleam of the rising sun. It was a joyful message. Hence the repentance he preaches cannot be one of predominant mourning; and to adopt such a symbol would but insure hypocrisy in its use. Sitting in sackcloth and ashes could not represent such a repentance. Another symbol, therefore, is introduced—one which does not dispense with contrition, but sets a bow in its cloud. This repentance is no prolonged period of mourning, but a sorrow-glad TURNING, and may well find expression in *baptism*.

Let us now read this typical repentance of the Jewish nation, and of the Jewish prophets, into John's language: "I indeed baptize you in water in order to your solemn abandonment of your past, and your contrite surrender to God and entrance upon his service." Well, if John's baptism was not a mere empty ceremony—a mere outward act—that is just what it *was* for; and the repentance—the turning, the "giving the hand" to God—took place *in* the symbolic act, just where the Jews were wont to place it. Here all difficulty with this passage vanishes. John's language is very happily expressive of just what took place. The baptism *was* in order to (with a view to) this repentance.

John's baptism, however, was not only a baptism "unto (*eis*) repentance," but also "unto (*eis*) remission of sins." The construction in both cases is precisely the same. Do these expressions locate similarly the repentance and the remission of sins? The same expression concerning remission of sins is

used in regard to Christian baptism in Acts ii. 38—εις ἄφεσιν (unto remission). But this is also spoken of in Acts xxii. 16 under the figure of a *washing away* of sin. Now in washing, the cleansing is not effected *after* the washing, but *in* the act. The same is true of Peter's reference to the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark, which he declares to be a type of baptism. The "eight souls" were not saved by water *after* the flood, but while the water was bearing the ark up, and thus preventing the drowning of its inmates. Titus iii. 5 conveys a similar thought. The salvation is represented as being accomplished "*through* the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit," not *after* it. These references do not imply that the water of baptism has any independent saving efficacy, but they do imply that the remission of sins was regarded as taking place *in* baptism. If the "unto (εἰς) remission of sins," when referring to Christian baptism, points to such a relation between baptism and remission, the same language would indicate that remission of sins took place also *in* John's baptism; and thus remission of sins would sustain precisely the same relation to baptism, in point of time, as repentance did. The language is "unto (εἰς) repentance" in one case, and "unto (εἰς) remission of sins" in the other; and both expressions point to a purpose reaching its accomplishment in baptism. Thus the whole transaction grows luminous; for John's baptism was nothing else than a meeting place of the sinner and his God. It was a divine-human act; on the part of the sinner, a farewell to sin and a surrender to God, the "giving of the hand," the reaching up of the soul to God in holy commitment; on the part of God, the remission of

sins, the kiss of reconciliation. It was a holy place; and well might John warn off all profane hearts from such ground, as he did the Pharisees and Sadducees, in verses 7-12. John's baptism was a burial from the old life, and a rising to a life of righteousness; and it was a washing in which God remitted the sins of the penitent.

It has been the object of this examination to present nothing but facts; and it is seen that under their light, the entire language regarding John's baptism stands out in the symmetry of perfect fitness, and the whole institution grows holy with a new light. Well might it be called a "baptism of repentance," for it held repentance as the casket holds the jewel. Well might it be said to be "unto repentance," for that was just what it was for; and "unto remission of sins," for it was for that also. Its spiritual element was the spiritual clasping of hands between the soul and its God. If we drop the word "repentance," with its later limitations of meaning, and substitute the word which generally stands for that act in the Old Testament, all difficulty vanishes from this passage. John's baptism was the baptism of *turning*, because it was the turning act—the act in which the people turned to God. He baptized them "unto," or "in order to" *turning*, because the very purpose of the act was that they should turn to God—spiritually "give the hand" to God—in it.

It is important for us to observe, however, that this meaning of repentance (μετάνοια) was probably not the only one, even at that time. The Greek-speaking Jews had for centuries been familiar with μετάνοια with its classical senses; and there is no reason to doubt that other senses of the word existed side by

side with this; nor can we be *sure* that even in speaking of John's repentance the word always has this meaning. As Prof. Sanday says that Paul glides from one sense of the word *faith* to another, as the hand of a violin player passes from one string to another; so may the inspired writers have passed from one to the other of the meanings of repentance, and this even unconsciously, as is often done. It is only necessary that we recognize that the sense just described was *one* of the meanings of the word *repentance* which lay familiarly in the minds of the people at that time. Then, according to the mental aptitude by which we swiftly and unconsciously fit meaning to context, this meaning would take its place in such a passage as Mt. iii. 11. It may be said, however, that there is nowhere any statement regarding John's repentance that this definition will not fully satisfy; and, while we have not the *data* for a definite conclusion, there is *no reason* to think that he used the word in any other sense. He called the people to a solemn leave-taking of their sins, and a heart-felt surrender to God and entrance upon his faithful service, and then bade them bring forth fruits befitting such a step. This meaning of the word implies, or presupposes, change of purpose and everything else which belongs to any conception of repentance; but the focus of vision is fixed on the contrite turning from the life of sin and surrender to God, rather than on the change of purpose.

But something afterward happened to this definition of repentance, and it finally passed out of use. What befell it, and how it came about, must now be considered. As soon as we reach Christian baptism, we become aware, by the change of phraseology, that

something has happened. We also discover that this change appertains, not to the relation of baptism to remission, but to its relation to repentance. Both baptisms are said to be "unto (εἰς) remission of sins," but Christian baptism (1) is never, like John's baptism, called a "baptism of repentance"; (2) it is never said to be "unto repentance"; and (3) it is, unlike John's baptism, said to be preceded by repentance (Acts ii. 38). This change of expression evidently points to some underlying difference, and locates that difference in the relation of repentance to baptism. What is the nature of this change, and what brought it about?

I think we may say unhesitatingly that it is all due to the presence of a new factor in conversion—*personal faith in Christ*—the act of personal adhesion to Christ—entrance into union with him.

John's converts had the usual Jewish faith in God, and superadded to this a belief in the near approach of the Messiah and his kingdom, but this was vastly different from personal faith in Christ. The Jewish nation had long believed in God and cherished the hope of Israel, and John's disciples added to this only the belief that its fulfilment was near at hand; but, in personal faith in Christ we have the overshadowing and distinctive feature of Christianity.

In the examination of the nature of this faith, it was shown that it embraced within itself self-surrender to God, and a death to (quittance of) the old life and entrance upon a new—that is, it completely subsumed, or drew into itself, the repentance of John. The spiritual element of Christian baptism, therefore, like John's, embraces a dying to sin and a rising to a better life, together with a surrender to God, but it

includes something vastly more—personal faith in Christ, union with him; and this new element is so characteristic, and of such overshadowing importance, that it gives the *name* to the whole. Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Lexicon* speaking of the passage in Mt. iii. 11, says: "There is a distinction between the baptism of John and that of the Messianic church, in which μετάνοια is appropriated by πίστις. The baptism of John is styled κατ' ἐξ, the βάπτισμα μετανοίας [the baptism of repentance] in Mk. i. 4; Lk. iii. 3; Acts xiii. 24, xix. 4—we might accordingly designate Christian baptism βάπτισμα πίστεως [the baptism of faith]. Compare Acts xix. 4, 5," etc. Thus faith takes the place of the repentance of John.

We are not left to conjecture with respect to this change, but are able to look directly in upon the process and observe the change actually taking place. During Christ's earthly ministry, the many who received him and became his disciples abandoned their sinful lives, surrendered or committed themselves to him, and entered upon a morally and religiously new course of life as his disciples. Now, this was called coming to him (Jn. vi. 35; Lk. xiv. 26, 27), receiving him (Jn. i. 12), or believing on (εἰς—into union with) him. (See passages referred to and many others.) But the question now arises, Why was this called *faith* rather than *repentance?* I think we have a complete answer in the nature of Christ's mission. This was not, like that of the prophets, a simple calling of the people back to righteousness or the prediction of some future blessing or calamity. It included these, but it was something vastly more and different. It was a proposition to transform human nature, to *re-make* men, to give them new life, and to this

end to establish a vital connection between himself and them, flooding their life with a new vital force. And this transformation was to free them from the drudgery of righteousness, and make it a delight and a passion to which they might abandon themselves as they formerly had been wont to abandon themselves to sin; and then, in pursuance of such ennoblement of nature, they were to be raised to the station of sons of God and empalaced in the royal mansions of the Eternal Father. And this, Jesus taught, was all to be brought about by uniting with him and clinging to him. This was the very heart of Jesus' mission: not so much the preaching of *duty*—though this was involved—as the preaching of τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, this *glad news*, or *gospel*.

Now, such a proposition would appeal predominantly to *faith*. The great question with men would be, can all this be true? How can a man be born again, or be re-made? And who is this Jesus? Can he make all these claims good? Then, having become satisfied on these points, there would be the actual intrustment of themselves to him to be made over, or faith in the sense of practical trust. And then, according to Christ's teaching, a close, personal, affectionate adhesion—clinging to him—was essential to the establishment of the moral, vital connection; so that they might dwell in him as a branch dwells in the vine. Thus, while commitment to Christ involved the elements of John's repentance, this faith subsumed or took all this in. As the sun in the heavens eclipses all other lights, causing them to be lost to view in its floods of glory, so that, while it is literally true that we have starlight at midday as well as at midnight, the starlight is nevertheless lost in the

greater glory; so the faith of Christ swept the repentance of John into itself, and it died into a higher life—faith. It was a rivulet lost in the Mississippi.

But this great act of believing oneself into union with Christ was naturally preceded by some preparatory steps. It was first necessary that his claims and proposals should be credited. Hence we have belief, or faith in its lower sense—what Alexander Campbell calls the "cause" of the personal faith in Christ. When this step has been taken, there springs out of a glad sorrow a new moral *purpose* to forsake sin and join oneself to Christ. But this change of purpose was one of the meanings of μετάνοια (repentance)—the leading one which it brought with it from the Greek language. Hence, of course, this step will be called by that name, and we thus have the specific use of the word *repentance* in Christian conversion. Then follows the greatest, most momentous and epochal step of the life—personal faith in Christ, described by Alexander Campbell as "faith in Christ," as lovingly and loyally "yielding to requisition," and as "trusting in him and putting ourselves under his guidance"; and by others as appropriative trust, and entrance into union with Christ.

Thus, by observing the facts as they lie before us in the narratives, we have a complete explanation of the change of phraseology in regard to repentance in its relation to baptism. It is not the solution of a difficulty by pointing out what *might* have taken place, but by noting what actually *did* take place. The reason, then, why Christian baptism is not called a "baptism of repentance" is that it is the baptism of *faith;* the reason why it is never said to be a baptism

"unto repentance" is that it is a baptism *unto faith*;* and as one of the former meanings of repentance has been subsumed in this faith, the repentance of Christian conversion naturally applies to another step in the process. That the Scriptures so regard it, let us observe that the repentance in sackcloth and ashes or in fasting, the great typical repentance of the Jewish nation and of the prophets, was not specifically a change of purpose (or it could not have taken place in sackcloth and ashes), but a *turning to the Lord* (επιστρέφω); but that the specific repentance of Christian conversion *is not* a turning to the Lord, but a step antecedent to such turning. Peter, in Acts iii. 19, exhorts the people, saying: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out," etc.; and, in Acts xxvi. 20, Paul declares that it had been his wont to preach to both Jews and Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance." In both these passages repentance and turning are distinguished, and stand to each other as cause and effect: and in both, the word translated "turn," is ἐπιστρέφω, the word commonly used in the Septuagint to represent the Jewish repentance. We have here a confirmation in Christian usage of the very position to which the facts of the gospel history had conducted us. Repentance had formerly been a turning (ἐπιστρέφω); it now takes place before the turning. It therefore now applies to a different step in the process of conversion, and its exact position is here indicated.

*Lange's Commentary represents John's baptism as a "baptism unto repentance" and Christian baptism as a baptism "unto faith in Him [Christ] and the confession of Him."—*Com., in locis* Mt. iii. 11 and Acts xix. 5.

Not only is the turning to God represented as following repentance in Christian conversion, but both faith and baptism are made to occupy the same position. Paul testified to both Jews and Greeks "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21. *Cf.* also Mk. i. 15), and Peter commanded the multitude on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized (Acts ii. 38). Thus turning to God, this faith, and baptism all stand as sequent to repentance. Are they different acts? If faith be a coming to Christ (Jn. vi. 35), a receiving him (Jn. i. 12), and an obeying him (Jn. iii. 36), it is, by its nature, the great turning act. If baptism be a death to sin (Rom. vi. 2, 6), a uniting with Christ (*v.* 5), and a putting him on (Gal. iii. 27), it is also, by its nature, the great turning act. This faith and the spiritual element in baptism are the same, and they are by their nature the turning act in conversion. Peter places this turning and baptism in precisely the same position in conversion. In Acts ii. 38 he commands men to repent and be baptized unto (εἰς) remission of sins, and in Acts iii. 19 he commands them to repent and turn again that (εἰς, unto) their sins may be blotted out. Thus he places baptism between repentance and remission of sins, and, with the same connecting word (εἰς), places the turning in the same position. Baptism and this turning are not precisely the same thing, for baptism has more in it than the candidate's part, but the candidate turns to God *in* his baptism. All that precedes is but preparatory to this act of surrender and entrance into union with Christ, which is the great turning act.

John was the last of the prophets, and his repentance was that of the prophets; but that repentance

was a spiritual act fitted to take place (as it often did) *in* a physical act of expression. Appropriative faith in Christ (not Christian repentance) takes the place of that repentance in Christian conversion: and it is accordingly fitted to (and does) take place in its physical act of expression—baptism.

All this has an important bearing on our position. Here is a passage which, according to the common understanding of its terms, seems to contradict the facts of spiritual experience. No rendering of *eis* which reputable scholarship honors with its sanction permits us to place this repentance *before* baptism, and none of our usual meanings of repentance gives a good sense *after* it. But when we recognize that the profoundest repentance known to the Jewish people at that time, and one most highly honored by Christ himself, was regarded as taking place *in* the physical act which represented it, and forming the spiritual element in that act; and when we note carefully just what that repentance was, and then place it in John's baptism, where according to spiritual laws it belonged, all difficulties vanish, and corroborations come in from every direction. In brief, we cannot place this repentance *before* baptism for linguistic reasons· nor *after* it, for psychological reasons. The Jews placed the profoundest repentance known to them *in* its symbolic act; when we place this repentance there all difficulties cease. Our difficulty with this passage, as well as with much else found in the Scriptures regarding baptism, is that we have drifted away from the primitive ways of thinking regarding such acts. The divorce between the spiritual and the

expressional had not then been made—and it should not be made now; for the Scriptural way is the way of the heart.

CHAPTER III.

FAITH DURING THE PERIOD OF CHRIST'S EARTHLY MINISTRY.

We now pass to the consideration of faith in Christ's time. We have already seen that believing on (εἰς) Christ is spoken of as *coming to* him, as *receiving* him, and as *obeying* him, and is defined by our lexical authorities as "to give oneself up to" him, to "resign oneself unto" him, and to enter into "self-surrendering fellowship" with him. It is plain that in these designations the thought relates specifically to the final step in conversion. They all point to an act of self-surrender and appropriation of Christ. The previous steps are certainly implied, for this could not take place without them, but they are not brought into view.

This, however, was not always the case. Of the three steps taken by the mind in conversion—belief of the truth concerning Christ, an earnest and heartfelt resolution to forsake all that is inconsistent with his service (repentance), and an entrance into vital union with him (appropriative faith)—it is certain that the first is sometimes embraced in the meaning of the term *to believe on* (εἰς) him. This is clearly the case in Jn. ii. 23, where the belief of the people is said to have been due to the "signs which he did," thus showing that it embraced intellectual conviction, while the context indicates that it also included more than that. In such cases *believing on* Christ is made to include the entire process of conversion, and it is evident that, when so used, it cannot be viewed as

taking place *in* any act of profession. Partial inclusion is all that can be affirmed of profession in such a case. The act—or rather the process—of believing on Christ will then coincide with profession only in its final step.

This differs somewhat from the former representation, by which believing on Christ—in the sense of the appropriating act—takes place *in* profession, but the two views agree in placing precisely the same spiritual act in profession, and they would ordinarily be designated by the same terms. In either case the act of believing is so bound up with profession as not to take place without it. Believing on Christ would therefore be represented as a *spiritual-professional* act, an act which embraces profession. This is what we should expect if our interpretation in the preceding chapters has been correct. If, in this educative period, when the apostles were receiving their first ideas of faith, it was represented as embracing profession, it would be perfectly natural for them in their own teaching to place the spiritual act of appropriation in baptism where it must be if baptism be a condition of salvation. But, if faith and profession were regarded at this period as different acts, having no relation to each other beyond that of cause and effect, and more or less distantly separated in point of time, such a course on the part of the apostles would seem inconsistent.

Before questioning the Scriptures on this point, it may be well to notice that in this formative period, in which steps preparatory to the establishment of the kingdom were being taken, we are not informed that there was any fixed and invariable form of profession. That Jesus required men to profess him open-

ly, as a condition of being owned by him, is certain (Mt. x. 32); but whether the profession was made in words or by some expressive bodily act, we are not informed.* The word ὁμολογέω, rendered *confess*, is not confined in its meaning to simple verbal profession, but may apply to all the means of acknowledgment of another.† It is not improbable that profession during Christ's personal ministry consisted for the most part in verbal acknowledgment, together with such other acts of expression as the heart might dictate; perhaps kneeling or prostration in the attitude of worship, or sometimes some such beautiful act as that of the "woman that was a sinner" who anointed the Savior's feet with precious ointment and, washing them with her tears, wiped them with the hairs of her head.

Before inquiring whether the Scriptures represent the act of believing on Jesus at this time as including profession, it is important that we remember that, as previously shown, this phrase is sometimes used in other senses than that we are now considering. Thayer's *Lexicon* defines πιστεύω εἰς as "to have a faith directed unto, believing or in faith to give oneself up to Jesus." The first of these statements defines a *state*, the second an *act*, of the mind. The *state* may be one of self-surrendering trust (Mt. xviii. 6), or one of simple belief (Jn. xii. 42); the *act* is clearly described as self-surrender. It is clear that when *believing on* Jesus is applied to the continued trust which succeeds self-surrender, it will not be

*Jesus practiced baptism at one time (Jn. iii. 22; iv. 1), but for how long, and to what extent, we do not know.

†Thayer's *Lexicon* defines it, both here and in Lk. xii. 8, as "to profess."

represented as connected with any particular act of profession. The state of mind on which the person entered in self-surrender continues, and the profession then made still shadows the life and gives it its standing before the world. The believer is *living in* faith and profession, not *entering on* either. It is also evident that when this phrase is used to represent a simple belief (even though sympathetic) of what is true, as in Jn. xii. 42, it cannot include profession. But faith in this lower sense was not deemed adequate. The rulers who believed on Jesus, but did not confess him, were not accepted. Their faith lacked the important element of self-surrender. Hence the necessity of profession in order to being owned by Jesus. The lower sense of faith passed into the higher in profession.

It is but just also to state that, if believing on Jesus was commonly understood to include profession, it would not be necessary that the context should in every case show that it was so used. In brief records of fact, very much that happens is not reflected in the narrative, and a word which has come to be familiarly used in a certain sense is to be so understood, unless something in the context forbids it. The question, then, is, Are there any cases in which the circumstances show that believing on Jesus was used to include profession? and are they of such a nature as to indicate that this was a familiar use of the term?

In Jn. ii. 23, 24 we read: "Now when he [Jesus] was in Jerusalem at the passover during the feast, many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for he knew all men," etc. If the believing

on him here spoken of had not included a commitment to him, there would have been no call for the remark that "Jesus did not trust himself to them." How should he think of doing so if they had made no advances to him? Prof. Stevens, commenting on this passage, says: "The point which the apostle emphasizes by the play on the word πιστεύειν may be partially brought out by rendering: They believed on him but he did not believe in them, for he knew the real superficiality of their *professed* faith."* Believing on Jesus was therefore, in this case, an act including profession.

In Jn. viii. 30, 31 it is said: "As he spake these things many believed on him. Jesus therefore said to those Jews which had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples." In this passage, after the statement is made that "many believed on him," it is immediately said that Jesus addressed himself to *this* company, or class. In the act of believing on him, therefore, they had done something to distinguish themselves from the mixed audience before him; so that he now addresses them separately. Just what they had done is not stated, but it is clearly implied in what Christ proceeds to say to them. He tells them that, if they abide in his word, they will then be *truly* his disciples. They had, therefore, by some act distinguishing them from the rest of the crowd, joined themselves to him as his "disciples"; so that he now proceeds to address them in that capacity. We have here, therefore, profession and entrance upon discipleship,† as elements in the mean-

* *The Johannine Theology*, p. 221.

†Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Lexicon* supports this interpretation of the passage. See under *pisteuoo*.

ing of *believing on* Jesus.

After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, it is said: "Many therefore of the Jews which came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done. The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said: What do we? for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation" (Jn. xi. 45-48). Could any such result be anticipated from a secret faith, which the Romans could not know to exist? This believing on Jesus which excited the alarm of the Jewish rulers was nothing short of a public adherence to Jesus, such as would attract the attention of the Roman government, and, as it was feared, produce serious political complications. Believing on Jesus was—or embraced—some public act of devotement to him; and it was the fact that he might thus attract to himself too many followers, that excited the alarm of the Jewish rulers. This passage, furthermore, bears evidence that such was the current meaning of the expression *to believe on* Jesus, at that time, and that it was so understood, not only by the disciples themselves, but by the people at large.

Other cases might be cited, but it is not necessary to multiply examples. Those already given are sufficient to show that believing on Jesus was understood to embrace some act of profession or commitment to him.

It now remains to inquire how far these findings are supported by the highest standard authorities, grammatical and lexical. We may first refer to the defini-

tion of Winer, already quoted, but now reproduced with a view to noting its entire content. He defines πιστεύειν εἰς τινα as, "in faith to resign oneself *unto* any one, to profess oneself a believer *on* one, *fide se ad aliquem applicare*" (to unite, or join, oneself to any one).* Here we have the definition of this phrase in its three-fold aspect: mentally, a *resigning*, or *surrendering* oneself to another; externally, *profession;* and, as regards the relation established, the *joining oneself to* another. This justifies completely, and in every particular, the conclusions reached by our own examination of the Scripture sources.

Robinson's *New Testament Greek Lexicon* defines πιστεύειν with εἰς followed by the accusative as, "to believe and rest upon, to believe, and profess"; and he defines πιστεύειν εἰς το ὄνομα Ιησοῦ as, "to believe on Jesus and profess his name." He defines the simple πιστεύω, when used "absolutely," as "*to believe*, i. e., to believe and profess Christ, to be or become a Christian." Thayer's *New Testament Lexicon* defines "the faith by which a man embraces Jesus" as "*a conviction full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah—the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined with obedience to Christ.*" Here we have obedience as a constituent part of this faith.

Cremer, in his *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, says: "Yet it cannot be denied that this element of *acknowledgment* (which is primarily formal merely) does not fully come up to or exhaust St. John's conception of faith. There is, with the

*Winer's *Grammar of N. T. Greek*, § 31, 5.

acknowledgment, in most cases,* an acting upon it (cf. Jn. ix. 38, πιστεύω κυριέ και προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ, with ver. 35, σὺ πιστεύεινεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, vv. 36. 30, 31), and this is *adhesion* (becoming his disciples, ix, 27 v. 46, viii. 31)."

Here we have the statement that mere belief, with avowal, does not fill out the measure of John's conception of faith, but that it includes also the "acting upon" this conviction. What is meant by "acting upon it" may be learned by consulting the reference which is inclosed in the parenthesis, viz., Jn. ix. 38, compared with the preceding 35th verse. The case is that of the man born blind, whom Jesus had healed. After his encounter with the Jews, who had cast him out of the synagogue, Jesus met him and said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man answered: "And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" Then Jesus said to him: "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee." Then follows verse 38, to which Cremer refers: "And he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him." Here there was, besides the mental conviction and verbal confession, a *worshipping*, or, more literally, a *prostration* before Jesus in the act of worship. It was an act of self-surrender and devout adoration. This, then, is what Cremer means by "acting upon it"—that element which is necessary to fill out John's conception of faith. And this was *believing on* Jesus. At the close of this parenthesis Cremer continues: "And this is *adhesion*"; and explains this in another parenthesis by saying that it is a

*It should be noted that Cremer is here considering *all* those terms and phrases by which faith is designated, and is not referring to any one phrase.

"becoming His disciples"; and refers, among other passages, to Jn. viii. 31 (see also *v.* 30). Cremer's view therefore is, briefly stated, that faith was not only a belief and avowal of the truth, but that it included an *acting upon* this belief by some step of commitment to Jesus and entrance upon his service. I may add that, while Cremer is here primarily considering John's conception of faith, he refers also to both Matthew and Mark in support of the same definition.*

These quotations accord in a striking manner with the conclusions reached through our own investigation. Winer and Robinson distinctly name profession as a constituent element of the act of believing on (εἰς) Jesus. Thayer makes it include obedience to Christ; while Cremer declares that it includes an acting upon one's *conviction*, and illustrates his meaning by citing a case of verbal confession, joined with

*It is proper to say that these definitions which I have cited from authorities, are not limited by them to the period of Christ's personal ministry.

It may be well to add that Cremer says that *pisteuein* "is used without any addition to denote the fully persuaded, confiding behavior toward the God of Grace and Promise." What is meant by this "behavior" will appear from the following quotation which is found under the head of *pistis*: "Comparatively little is said of faith in the O. T.; man's whole bearing towards God and His revealed will is usually expressed otherwise; according to the economy of the law, it is called a *doing of His will, walking in the ways of his commandments*, remembering the Lord (Ex. iii. 15), etc., and only as special graces do *trust, hope, waiting upon the Lord, appear*. In the N. T. on the other hand *pistis* appears as the generic name for this whole bearing." – *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*, the last quotation from pp. 479 80.

Thus it appears, according to Cremer, that while faith in its beginning is *belief* and avowal, conjoined with an *acting upon* it, it is in its continuance in the Christian life, not simply a mental state or attitude, but also all whatever that springs from such state or attitude—the whole *behavior* or *conduct* of the Christian life.

an act of commitment to Jesus. The last two of these authorities choose to be more general in their statements, but their definitions embrace the same elements as those of Winer and Robinson. They all concur in the fact that faith does not reach its consummation apart from some act of obedience or profession.

Thus, we are completely supported in our lexical findings by the highest linguistic standards of our time; and our own contribution to this subject consists, not in presenting a new definition of faith, but in calling attention to the fact that the obedience—the profession—is not a merely physical act added to an already completed faith, but that the spiritual act itself does not reach its consummation apart from the act of profession.

This was the view of faith that the apostles carried with them into the apostolic age.

CHAPTER IV.

FAITH DURING THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

We have already examined at some length the relation of faith to baptism in the apostolic age, but its consideration has thus far been from the standpoint of baptism. It remains to consider the same question from the standpoint of faith. We have seen that the two great apostles, Paul and Peter, placed in baptism a spiritual element which the Scriptures describe as (appropriative) faith, and that it was to this that they ascribed the saving efficacy of baptism on the candidate's part. It now remains to inquire whether that faith which was made the condition of remission of sins, or salvation, was regarded in the apostolic age as a naked spiritual act taking place before baptism, or a spiritual-professional act embracing baptism.

But before proceeding to examine evidence, it is necessary to call attention to the fact that, while during Christ's earthly ministry there was, so far as we can learn, no fixed and authorized form of profession, we do meet at the threshold of the apostolic age an act definitely established and commanded by Christ to be administered among all nations to whom the gospel should be carried. That act is Christian baptism. As, however, this act was not to be performed by the convert himself, but by another person, and as it was to be administered only to those who were of a certain belief and state of mind, and as this fact could not be ascertained except through a statement of the candidate, verbal confession became one

of the approaches of baptism. It was not regarded, however, as an independent act of profession, but as subordinate to baptism, which was the great act of Christian profession. It is not mentioned in the Commission, nor in the records of a large number of conversions in the Book of Acts, although baptism is often spoken of, and given a position of prominence. As baptism was administered as soon as the candidate was ready to give himself up to Christ, confession was brought in close connection with it, and seems to have been regarded as a subsidiary part of profession, of which baptism was the principal act.

Did the faith, then, that conditions salvation take place before baptism, or embrace baptism?

The evidence on this subject will naturally fall into three parts—(1) evidence from the Commission, (2) negative evidence in the apostolic age, (3) positive evidence in the apostolic age.

§1. Does the Commission teach that that Personal Faith in Christ which obtains Salvation precedes Baptism?

The commission given by Christ to the apostles before his ascension belongs to two periods. In point of time it belongs to Christ's earthly ministry, and was spoken before the inauguration of the apostolic period on the day of Pentecost; in point of application it belongs alone to this latter period. It was not to be administered until the apostles should receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and be endowed with power for the undertaking—an event which took place on the day of Pentecost. Thenceforward this Commission became their law of action, and its execution their life work. It is the fundamental law of the kingdom of heaven; and if it has any bearings on the

question we are considering, they will be very important. Does it furnish any ground for the belief that the faith that appropriates Christ and his salvation takes place before baptism?

In Matthew's version of the Commission we have these words: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt. xxviii. 19). We have seen that believing on the Lord Jesus had formerly included the act of becoming his disciple; and this act was naturally the final step in the process. If, then, the requirement of the Commission is that men shall first be made disciples and then be baptized, will not faith reach its consummation before baptism? There are some who take this view, claiming that the "them" of this passage refers not to "nations," but to "disciples," and that the meaning therefore is, that only such are to be baptized as have already become disciples.

A serious objection to this view is that the word ἔθνη (nations) is the only noun in the sentence to which αὐτούς (them) can refer. Everyone familiar with the Greek knows that the word "disciples" is not in the original; or rather, that it is represented by no Greek word, but has crept into the translation through a free rendering of the Greek verb μαθητεύσατε, which means literally *to disciple*. The American Bible Union translation rendered the word "disciple,"—"disciple all nations"; and Philip Schaff, no doubt, expresses the true reason why this rendering has not been preserved in the Revised Version, when he says that it is "perhaps not sufficiently popular." How-

ever this may be, it is well known that there is no noun in the original representing the word "disciples," but only a verb meaning *to disciple*. The αὐτούς (them), therefore, refers naturally and directly to ἔθνη (nations); and the "baptizing" refers to "nations," and not to "disciples."

A supposed difficulty has been urged against this that αὐτούς (them) is in the masculine gender, while the grammatical gender of ἔθνη (nations) is neuter. It is therefore claimed that αὐτούς cannot refer to ἔθνη, and that we are forced by this fact to find a noun *implied* in the verb μαθητεύσατε, and that this noun will naturally be μαθητας (disciples), which like the αὐτούς is masculine.

But this whole procedure rests on a misconception. It is not true that a masculine pronoun may not refer to a noun of a different gender. See Crosby's *Greek Grammar*, §495; also NOTE, and compare with §446. Winer says that pronouns "not unfrequently take a different gender from that of the nouns to which they refer, regard being had to the meaning of the nouns." He says, "this happens especially when an *animate* object is denoted by a neuter substantive." This is the case in the passage before us, and Winer refers to it as an example under the rule. Buttmann also makes the same statement, and refers to this passage. In Rev. xix. 15 αὐτούς refers directly to ἔθνη, as also does αὐτοι in Rom. ii. 14.* The construction, therefore, is perfectly clear and αὐτούς refers to ἔθνη, and not to "disciples," which is not in the passage.

But there is another point which also deserves

*See also Acts xv. 17; xxvi. 17; Gal. iv. 19, and many other passages, where a masculine pronoun is made to refer to a neuter noun.

notice. If the meaning were that the apostles should first make disciples and then baptize them, we should expect to have μαθητεύσατε changed into a participle, and βαπτιζοντες into a verb. Meyer, one of the best Greek scholars, says: "βαπτιζοντες, etc., by which the μαθητεύειν is to be brought about, not what is to take place *after* the μαθητεύσατε, which would require μαθητευσαντες-βαπτιζετε" (having discipled, baptize).*

The meaning of this language, then, is clearly that the apostles were to make disciples of the nations by baptizing them; and Mark's version of the Commission informs us that this baptism was to be preceded by preaching of the gospel, which was to be believed before baptism.

Against this, however, it has been urged that in Jn. iv. 1 Jesus is spoken of as having made and baptized more disciples than John: and that, therefore, it had been Jesus' practice to make disciples *before* baptizing them; and it is held that his language should be so understood in this case. To this it may be replied that opposite the Greek text of this verse Westcott and Hort have the words, "some primitive error not improbable." But even were genuineness of this passage beyond question, it would still remain that the καὶ (and), which connects the two verbs *make* and *baptize*, has a wider meaning than the English word *and*, and often has the force of *and even*—Jesus was making *and even* baptizing (as well as John) more disciples, etc. This is the view of many of the ablest commentators, including

*Translated and indorsed by Philip Schaff, in Lange's *Com., in loc.*—a more forcible rendering than that of Mr. Christie in the Meyer *Commentary*.

Godet, who says: "The term *disciples* . . . . here denotes the baptized."*

In view of all these considerations, it appears that the language of this passage is without difficulty, and that it declares baptism to be one of the steps in making disciples, a purpose it is eminently fitted to serve if it be all that the Scriptures declare it to be. If it be the act of putting on Christ, or taking him as one's own, and of entering into union with him, it must be by its very nature the great discipling act.

The case then stands thus: During Jesus' former ministry *believing on* him included becoming his disciple; if it does so now *it includes baptism, for that is part of the discipling process.* So far, then, as this passage has any bearing on our question, it tends to the conclusion that faith is not consummated before baptism.

Mark's statement of the Commission is as follows: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (ch. xvi. 15, 16).†

Here let us note that baptism is made a condition of salvation just as distinctly as is faith; and that it is the *same* salvation of which they are both conditions. Let us observe, also, that we do not here have the phrase *believe on*, which naturally refers to a person,

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**Com., in loc.*

†The last twelve verses of this chapter, including vv. 15, 16, are not found in the two oldest Greek manuscripts, and are regarded by some able critics as not genuine. They, however, are not excluded from the Revised Version, and their *authenticity*—if not their genuineness—is, I believe, generally conceded. As we nowhere in this work have occasion to found any important conclusion on this passage, a critical examination of the question of its genuineness is not here called for.

but simply the word *believe*. This word has a variety of meanings, ranging from mere intellectual assent to faith in its highest and fullest sense. The question is, What does it mean here? Let us observe, further, that the word is not here used absolutely (does not stand alone, representing the entire condition of salvation), but as representing one of two conditions of salvation; and its meaning cannot be as comprehensive as if it stood for the entire condition. What, then, is its precise content in this connection? in other words, what does *believe* mean when the act is followed by baptism? In Acts viii. 12 we read: "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Here we have belief followed by baptism, and are able to determine just what it means. The person believed was Philip, and the *thing* believed was his preaching. The Samaritans believed what Philip preached *to be true*. This, then, is the faith that precedes baptism. It is not personal faith in Christ, but a belief of the gospel message, which *precedes* acceptance of Christ and surrender to him. If it be held that the believing spoken of in Mk. xvi. 16 means more than that of this passage, it would follow that the belief of the Samaritans fell short of what was commanded, and that Philip committed a grave blunder in baptizing them. But there is evidence in the language of Mark that the believing there has the same meaning. The command was to "preach the gospel"; and then it was said that he who believes (it) and is baptized shall be saved. The immediate context supplies the object of faith, which is the same as that in Acts viii. 12.

It does not follow, however, that the faith spoken of in either of these cases is bare intellectual assent. Thayer's definition of "the faith by which a man embraces Jesus," already referred to, is, "a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah—the divinely appointed author of eternal salvation in the kingdom of God, conjoined with obedience to Christ."* Here that part of faith which precedes obedience is a matter of the heart as well as of the understanding; it is a joyful and welcome conviction of the truth regarding Christ. Hence on the day of Pentecost it was they who *received*† the word (gave it welcome belief) that were baptized (Acts ii. 41). There then remains, over and above this joyful belief of the truth, according to Thayer's *Lexicon*, the element of "obedience to Christ," as a constituent of this faith.

But, as it may be objected that the wording of Mk. xvi. 16 is not precisely the same as that of Acts viii. 12, it may be well to examine the differences and see if they warrant us in taking *believe* in its absolute sense in Mark's statement.

Let us first say that when the word *believe* is used to represent the *entire* condition of salvation (the entire spiritual condition, if you please, for baptism is nothing but a spiritual act on the part of the candidate), as it sometimes does (Jn. vi. 47; Acts ii. 44 compared with *v.* 41; xix. 2 compared with *v.* 3), it means more than when used to represent a *part* of that condition, as in Mk. xvi. 16. The context in Acts ii. 44 and xix. 2 shows that when the word is

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*Thayer's *Lexicon, sub voce pisteuoo.*

†The original word is translated "welcomed" in Lk. viii. 40.

used alone, in its comprehensive sense, it includes baptism, while it certainly does not include it in Mk. xvi. 16. But is there not something in the construction of Mark's statement that requires us to take "believeth" in its widest sense, and throw baptism out as an extraneous act?

It may be urged that the word "believeth" in this passage stands in opposition to "disbelieveth," and that the latter indicates not simply a lack of intellectual assent, but something of perverse resistance to the truth, and that the contrast would imply the opposite of this quality in the believing. This consideration would have weight were the believing mere intellectual assent, but a welcome and hearty receiving of the word *is* the precise opposite of perverse resistance to conviction. Indeed, a glad and welcome belief of the truth about Christ implies *repentance*, for the gospel is anything but glad news to the man who is unwilling to forsake his sins. The meaning here given to "believeth," therefore, satisfies the antithesis completely.

Again, it may be said that the object of belief directly follows the verb in Acts viii. 12, but that in Mk. xvi. 16 no object follows the word "believeth." But an object—"the gospel"—has just been mentioned; and such previous mention of the object of faith is not unusual. See Mt. xxiv. 23, 26; Mk. xiii. 21. In all these cases the "it" is not in the original. But there is still more definite evidence that when *believe* is used to designate a part of the condition of salvation, it has a limited meaning, even though not directly followed by an object. In Acts xi. 20, 21 we read: "But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake

unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned to the Lord." Here the word "believed" is not followed by any object, the object being implied in *v.* 20, and is used, as in Mk. xvi. 16, to designate one of the conditions of salvation; but can it be said that he who has not yet turned to the Lord has *believed* in the broadest sense of that term? To believe in its absolute sense is to come into possession of "eternal life" (Jn. vi. 47). Do men possess "eternal life" before they turn* to the Lord? To believe on Christ is to *obey* him (Jn. iii. 36). Have those obeyed him who have not turned to the Lord? To *come to* Christ and to *turn to* him are but different descriptions of the same act; but to *come to* Christ is to *believe on* him (Jn. vi. 35). Is it not clear that the word *believe*, when standing alone and expressing comprehensively the entire condition of salvation, includes turning to the Lord? and is it not also true that, when it stands for but one of the conditions of salvation, even though it be not directly followed by an object, it has a less comprehensive meaning? It seems to me that Scripture usage not only permits, but requires, that we take the word believeth in Mk. xvi. 16 in a limited sense. The man who believes, in the broadest sense of the term,

*Thayer's *Lexicon* defines *epistrephos*, translated "turn" in this passage (Acts xi. 21), as "to turn, to turn oneself . . . of Gentiles passing over to the religion of Christ." Persons certainly cannot be said to have eternal life, or to be saved by Christ in any way, before passing over to his religion. Again, this *Lexicon* defines *to believe on* (*pisteuein eis*) Christ as, "believing or in faith to give oneself up to" Christ. Can any one give himself up to Christ without passing over to his religion? *Believing on* Christ, therefore, embraces this turning; but the word "believed," in this passage, does not embrace it, and is therefore used in a limited sense.

is already saved (has "eternal life," Jn. vi. 47—has "passed out of death into life," v. 24), but he who believes, in Mk. xvi. 16, is *not* saved until he is baptized.

So far regarding interpretation. There now remains one further consideration. If baptism is the final condition of salvation, as stated in this passage, the spiritual act of appropriating Christ's salvation will take place *in* baptism, and *nowhere else*. Men do not greet each other, even mentally, before they meet; they do not receive a gift, even mentally, before it is offered, and if salvation is not offered before baptism, the mental act of appropriating it will not take place before that time. If baptism be the final condition of salvation, the idea that men shall put on Christ, or take him as their own, that they shall enter into union with him, or that they shall seek for a good conscience, before baptism, is a psychological absurdity. It is no longer a question whether the Scriptures teach that these spiritual acts take place before baptism. They cannot possibly do so. With one single stroke the making of baptism the final condition of salvation puts all these spiritual acts *into* it: and if Paul and Peter had not placed appropriative faith in baptism, they would have committed a grave psychological blunder. Any interpretation, too, that makes the word "believeth," in this passage, include appropriative faith, simply makes the passage commit suicide. In Christ's earthly ministry, faith meant, according to Cremer's *Lexicon*, not only belief, but also an "acting upon it." It means that still.

Luke's statement of the Commission has no bearing on our question; and we may conclude by saying that the commission, which is to dominate the apos-

tolic age, does not place the faith that conditions salvation before baptism, but, on the contrary, gives evidence that it includes baptism.

§2. *In the Apostolic Age, the Personal Faith in Christ which obtains Salvation does not precede Baptism.*

Of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, twenty-three relate to the apostolic age. In them, especially in the Acts, which may be called the book of conversions, baptism is often mentioned, and faith almost continually. What do we find, then, in these twenty-three books regarding the relation of that spiritual act called *believing on the Lord Jesus Christ*, to baptism? Does this personal faith precede baptism? We may now affirm that *nowhere in any of these books, under any designation whatever, is the personal faith in Christ which conditions salvation, made to precede baptism.* The apostles nowhere commanded it as an antecedent to baptism, they nowhere required a confession of it as a condition of baptism, and the records of conversion under their ministry do not show that it did take place before baptism.

In the first place, let us observe that none of those specific designations by which this faith was represented in the time of Christ's earthly ministry is ever made to precede baptism. Nowhere are men said to *come to* Christ, to *receive* him, to *obey* him, or to *become his disciples*, and then receive baptism. Nor are men ever said to die to sin, to enter into Christ, or to put him on, and then receive baptism.

The most common designation of this faith was, as we have seen, the phrase πιστεύειν εἰς τινα (to believe on one) as applied to Jesus. This phrase occurs repeatedly both in the Acts and in the epistles, but nowhere

is any one ever instructed to believe on (εἰς) Christ and be baptized, nor is there any case where such a thing is said to have been done.

While this statement is strictly true, there is one passage which may seem to *imply* an exception to it, but which, by wise translation, in both the Authorized and Revised Versions, is hidden from the English reader. The passage is found in Rom. x. 14, and reads in the R. V.: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" In the phrase "in whom they have not believed," the word rendered "in" is εἰς, usually rendered *on*. Of what, now, is this *believing on* the Lord said to be the antecedent?

We are probably to understand this calling on the name of the Lord as referring to baptism. Peter quotes this same passage in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, applying it to the gospel age, and then, when he comes to tell inquirers what to do to be saved, commands them to repent and be baptized that they may receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. We know also that he looked upon baptism as a prayer (1 Pet iii. 21). Paul also was commanded to be baptized and wash away his sins "calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts xxii. 16). The verb is middle in all these cases, having the sense of calling on the Lord in one's behalf; and doubtless refers to the same thing. But our passage implies that one cannot so call on the Lord until he *believes on* (εἰς) him. Unless there are indications that the phrase is here used in a lower sense than that of the self-surrendering, appropriative faith that puts us in

possession of salvation, the passage would seem to place this faith before baptism.

The first thing that arrests our attention in reading the passage in both versions is that the phrase πιστεύειν εἰς is not translated *believe on*, but *believe in*—a phrase which means a simple belief of the truth, or at most trust, without the idea of self-surrender. In every case where the Greek phrase represents faith in its higher sense of self-surrender and appropriation, the Revised Version translates it *believe* ON. Indeed, it so translates it in every case but two, the other passage being Jn. xiv. 1, where it evidently does not include self-surrender and entrance upon discipleship, since the disciples had done this long before. The only suitable meaning in this place is trust. Why make an exception here, if the phrase has the usual sense of *believe* ON? Let it be noted also that the English and American committees both concurred in this exceptional rendering. Did they not, then, regard the phrase as having an exceptional sense in this passage? But this is not the only indication that they regarded εἰς as possessing a lower sense in this passage than usual. Referring to this faith in *v.* 17, the A. V. had read: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." This the R. V. has changed to: "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ," replacing the word "faith" by "belief." As *belief* as distinguished from *faith* relates to the assent of the understanding, we see that the revisers regarded the faith here spoken of as a belief of the truth; and the other change points to the same conclusion. They manage to get rid of both *believe on* and *faith*, and replace both by terms that point to intellectual conviction. Evidently they un-

derstand this to be the faith spoken of in this place.

If we examine the passage ourselves, we shall find ample grounds for this conclusion. Paul says: "How shall [literally, how can*] they call on him on whom they have not believed?" Now, it is evident that no one can call on one whom he has never heard of, or, what amounts to the same thing, the report concerning whom he does not believe; but it is *not* true that having received what he regards as reliable information concerning Christ, he cannot call on him if he will. The passage is true only of intellectual conviction, and *untrue* of any higher sense of faith. Again, if we attempt to read the higher sense of faith into this passage, we shall encounter other difficulties. If we suppose it to refer to that faith which puts us in possession of eternal life (Jn. iii. 36; vi. 47), which consists in a believing into Christ, and which includes death to sin and consequent justification (Rom. vi. 7), we shall have the believer already in possession of salvation, in which case it would be impossible for him to "call on the name of the Lord" that he might be saved. If calling on the name of the Lord is a condition of salvation, it is perfectly plain that any faith which precedes that act cannot be the faith that puts us in possession of salvation.

The fact, therefore, that Paul is using the phrase πιστεύειν εἰς in a lower sense in this passage is not at all doubtful; and we have here no exception to the statement that believing *on*, or *into*, the Lord Jesus Christ is never made to precede baptism.

Another passage which may be thought to indicate that justifying faith precedes baptism is the 10th

*It is the aorist subjunctive, *how shall they be able?*

verse of this same chapter: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10). If we take "righteousness" in the sense of justification and suppose confession to represent profession,* shall we not have both faith and justification clearly placed before baptism? If the order be, first, faith and justification, and then profession and salvation, such would, no doubt, be the case, but Winer declares the passage to be a case of parallelism,† and Prof. Sanday says that this verse "takes the form of Hebrew parallelism in which the balanced clauses are regarded as equivalent to each other."‡ If this is correct, the two clauses, instead of being statements of consecutive events, really traverse the same ground, and are only somewhat different representations of the same transaction. Meyer renders the poetic couplet into prose thus: "With the faith of the heart is united the confession of the mouth to the result that one obtains righteousness and salvation."§ If this be the true rendering, and it can hardly fail to be, as it simply drops the parallelism, the passage no longer

*The reason why Paul names confession here instead of baptism is evidently that he may state the gospel steps as nearly as possible in terms of the Old Testament passage from which he is arguing (see *v.* 8). He pursues a similar course when arguing from Abraham's faith to Christian faith in Rom. iv. Although elsewhere speaking of it as faith in Christ, he speaks of it each time in this chapter as a believing on *God*, that he may bring it into closer correspondence with Abraham's faith, which was a faith in God. Such things are purely argumentative accommodations, and affect in no way either the importance of faith in Christ, or the prominence of baptism as the principal act of profession.

†*Grammar, N. T. Greek*, §68, 3.

‡Sanday on Romans, in *The New Testament Com. for English Readers*, p. 245.

§*Com., in loc.*

presents any difficulty to the view we are considering. In what way the faith is united to the profession is not stated. So far as this statement is concerned it may as easily reach its consummation in profession as wholly precede it. It undoubtedly includes intellectual conviction (see *v.* 9), and all else that faith must contain in order to justification, including the spiritual act of appropriation, which takes place in baptism.

There is, then, nothing in this passage to show that the faith that appropriates salvation precedes baptism. Apart from the two passages examined I know of none whose statements would seem to be inconsistent with the position we are considering.

There is, however, one recorded case of conversion in which, while there is no statement to that effect, the circumstances might seem to imply that this appropriative faith really did reach its consummation before baptism. In the conversion of Cornelius and his friends (Acts x.) the Holy Spirit, in the form of a miraculous endowment, was bestowed upon them before their baptism. Would not this distinguished mark of favor cause them to lay hold on Christ's salvation at that time, enter into union with him, and rest in him as saved? This would depend on how they interpreted this manifestation. But whatever view we may take of this, it will in no way affect our position, from the fact that if these Gentiles did believe on Christ at that time in the fullest sense, it was occasioned by the bestowment of the Holy Spirit out of its usual order. This is the only case in the entire apostolic history in which the Holy Spirit was bestowed before baptism. Its order is clearly fixed in Acts ii. 38 as sequent to baptism, and to this the entire teaching and practice of the apostles conform. The

exception in this case was a miracle, wrought by God, for the accomplishment of a very important end. Years had passed since the giving of the Commission, yet the gospel had not been carried to any Gentile people. A divine interposition was necessary to open the understanding of the primitive church to this feature of Christ's kingdom. Two miracles—the appearance of the angel to Cornelius, and the sheet let down from heaven to Peter—served to bring Peter and Cornelius together, and Peter preached the gospel to him. Whether Peter would have admitted him to baptism without his becoming a proselyte to Judaism, we do not know, but it is certain that the six brethren with him, who had seen no miracle, would not have been satisfied, nor would the church at Jerusalem (Acts xi. 1-18); and without some further miraculous interposition a rupture of the church was almost sure to follow such a step. No miracle could have been so fitted to remove this difficulty as the conferring of this distinguishing gift of the Christian dispensation upon these people; and it needed to be conferred *before* baptism to prevent the objection of the brethren who were with Peter at that very point. That they were prepared to object may be inferred from Acts x. 47. No such demand ever again occurred for the breaking of the established order, and we have no record of any other deviation from it.

If, then, this exceptional bestowment of the Holy Spirit out of its established order chanced for once to take faith out of its natural connection and evacuate baptism, it will have no bearing on our position, which deals with the divinely appointed *order*, and not with exceptions.

It is by no means certain, however, that these

Gentiles did understand this miraculous bestowment of the Spirit as an admission into Christ's kingdom. The appearance of the angel to Cornelius and the language of approval on that occasion were a high mark of favor; yet they did not indicate that he was saved (Acts xi. 14), but rather that the way of salvation was to be opened to him. The miracle on this occasion may not have fulfilled more than its manifest purpose—the convincing of all parties that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the Christian salvation—and Peter proceeds, not to dispense with, but to command, that act (baptism) with which he had been wont to connect the remission of sins (Acts ii. 38). If it be thought that the moral state of these persons furnishes a sufficient evidence that they were then saved, what shall we say of the moral state of Cornelius before Peter visited him? Faith in Christ and loyalty to him are not morally different states from faith in God and loyalty to him: yet Cornelius, though possessing these, was not yet saved. It is important to remember that salvation, or remission of sins, does not depend on moral conditions alone. Still it is not necessary to our purpose to claim that the faith of these Gentiles did not reach its consummation before their baptism. If this exceptional bestowment of the spirit out of its usual order caused any displacement of faith, it can have only the force of an exception never to be repeated.

I know of no other passages that need examining in this connection, and we may pass to another consideration.

Another reason for thinking that the faith to which salvation is granted does not precede baptism, besides the fact that the Scriptures do not place it there, is to

be found in apostolic *practice*. Doctrine usually modifies practice. When it relates to the steps of conversion it always does so. Nothing is more manifest in the history of the church than that certain doctrines arise and shape to themselves a certain practice, and then disappear, leaving the practice to fall into decadence, be justified for a time on other grounds, and at last cease. Now, the view that appropriative faith, the appropriative spiritual act, takes place *before* baptism, and the view that it takes place *in* baptism, each has a controlling influence on practice. If the view be that this spiritual act takes place before baptism, we shall have the following effects:

In the first place, the salvation to be appropriated will itself be placed before baptism, or it could not be appropriated there. The putting on of Christ, entrance into union with him, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit will all precede baptism. The first effect of this on practice will be, that all expressions referring to baptism as a saving act and as a condition of remission of sins will disappear from Christian phraseology. Then, as it is part of the work of the Holy Spirit to shed abroad the sense of the divine love in the heart (Rom. v. 5) and grant the spirit of sonship, by which we cry Abba, Father, thus giving us evidence of the divine acceptance, it will follow that this evidence will be looked for before baptism, and the church will not feel authorized to admit to baptism any whom God has not so accepted. It must be ascertained, therefore, whether the candidate has the evidence of divine acceptance, and this will introduce a new practice—the relation of an experience. But, in case the person who has repented of his sins and sought the Lord fails to

receive this evidence of divine acceptance, inasmuch as he is not yet fit for baptism, there will be but one thing he can do—wrestle with God in prayer for the blessing; and if this fails, call on others to pray for him; and this will have to be continued until he finds peace or despairs of getting it. This will form the third step in practice originating in this view. A fourth modification of practice will be this: Inasmuch as those who receive the blessing will have received all the salvation there is for them this side of heaven, they will be in no haste about being baptized, and will defer it to their convenience. They will also speak of it as a non-essential and as a mere outward act, and will be likely to make of it a kind of commemorative rite looking back to their conversion. This will all naturally flow from the doctrine that the spiritual act of appropriating Christ and his salvation precedes baptism, and unless modified by some disturbing influence, will follow that belief with absolute certainty. It has done precisely this in modern times, and only recently the anxious bench has been discarded by the more intelligent, because of a loss of confidence in its practical workings. Now, not one of these steps of practice existed in the apostolic age. Had this doctrine obtained then, would it not have shaped to itself this practice then as well as now? Will not the same cause produce the same effect in one age as well as in another?

Let us now reverse the picture. If the spiritual act of appropriating Christ and his salvation is regarded as taking place *in* baptism, the salvation will be placed there also. Putting on Christ, union with Christ, remission of sins, and the reception of the Holy Spirit will all belong to baptism. Baptism will

then naturally be spoken of as a saving act, and as a condition of the remission of sins and of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Then the evidence of sonship imparted by the Holy Spirit will be sought through obedience in baptism; and, instead of telling an experience, the candidate on applying for baptism will simply confess his belief in the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus. There will also be no anxious bench, but if the baptized convert does not enjoy the spiritual assurance that he desires he will seek it in greater faithfulness and prayer for God's blessing. Then, as appropriative faith takes place in baptism, and the salvation to be appropriated is there also, the convert will desire baptism as soon as he is ready to give himself up to Christ, and baptism will be spoken of as a spiritual act and an important step in conversion. This will always be the result of placing appropriative faith in baptism, and *this was precisely the practice of the apostolic age*. The practice resulting from these two doctrines is very different; but it is the doctrine of baptismal appropriation that gives the apostolic practice, while the doctrine of prebaptismal appropriation draws away from that practice. The apostolic phraseology and practice will never return while this doctrine holds sway.

§3. The Personal Faith in Christ that obtains Salvation embraces Baptism.

Having considered this question negatively, I now proceed to give some positive evidence that the faith that obtains salvation, or remission of sins, was regarded in the apostolic age as embracing baptism. The first recorded account of the use of the expression *to believe on* (εἰς) Christ in the apostolic age is found in Acts x. 43. Peter says to Cornelius and his com-

pany: "To him [Jesus] bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on (εἰς) him shall receive remission of sins." The language of this passage is ambiguous; and it is uncertain whether the sense is that those who believe on Christ shall obtain remission of sins by being baptized in his name (*v.* 48), or whether the phrase "through his name" simply refers to the fact that God grants remission of sins by virtue of his mediatorial work. I see no reason why we should not take the sense as given by Dr. Lechler in Lange's *Commentary*, "Every one receives the remission of sins through Jesus Christ, who believes in [on] him."* This would make believing on (εἰς) Christ the only condition of remission. What, then, does this phrase mean in the apostolic age? We shall have a positive answer, if Peter anywhere else states the condition of remission of sins in more particular and definite terms. He does this in Acts ii. 38, when he commands those who had already come to believe in the Lordship and Messiahship of Jesus to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. If believing on the Lord Jesus Christ embraces the entire condition of remission, it is certain that, according to Peter, it includes baptism.† If it be asked whether we may not take believing on Christ in Acts x. 43 as a naked spiritual act, and then construe Acts ii. 38 in harmony with that conception, the answer is three-fold: (1) it is a law of interpretation that we shall make passages which are more particular and full in their statement

*Com., *in loc.*

†The efforts to show that the language in Acts ii. 38 does not make baptism a condition of remission will be shown to be unsuccessful in another place.

explain those which are more general and indefinite; (2) we cannot so explain Acts ii. 38 without violence to the language; and (3) we are not authorized to *assume* such a meaning of the phrase *to believe on* in Acts x. 43. This phrase—or its equivalent in the language spoken by Jesus—was currently used in the time of Christ's earthly ministry to include the entire process of becoming his disciple, including profession; and the very question at issue is whether it continues to have that meaning, with the presumption that it does. To give it the sense supposed, and then to force that sense on Acts ii. 38, would be arbitrary in the extreme. If believing on Christ is used in an absolute sense in Acts x. 43—that is, if it stands alone, without any supplementary condition, as the means of obtaining the remission of sins—it embraces baptism.

Let us now pass to a statement by another apostle. It is found, with its connection, in Acts xix. 1-7:

"And it came to pass, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit

came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. And they were in all about twelve men."

Preparatory to an understanding of this passage, let us endeavor to ascertain the status of these men. In the first place, they were not members of the church at Ephesus; for they needed to receive Christian baptism, and Aquila and Priscilla, who had been in daily association with Paul for a year and a half and had been competent to deal with the case of Apollos, certainly understood Paul's way of dealing with such cases, and would not have permitted them to be admitted improperly. Further, they had very little acquaintance with the church at Ephesus, and may not previously have attended any of its services; for they certainly could not have done so long without learning about so important a matter as the gift of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, they were acquainted with the leading facts regarding the life of Jesus and believed him to be the Messiah; for Paul did not find it necessary to preach the gospel to them. In this they were like Apollos, who had just been preaching at Ephesus, and who knew "only the baptism of John," but taught correctly "the things concerning Jesus." As it is not unlikely that these men had gained their knowledge concerning Jesus from listening to the preaching of Apollos, let us inquire what Apollos knew.

He knew "the things concerning Jesus," but his knowledge was not complete; for Aquila and Priscilla needed to give him further instruction. He probably knew the leading facts concerning the life of Jesus, was aware of his claims to be the Messiah and believed them to be true; but he was *not* acquainted with the Great Commission given to the apostles just

before his ascension, or he would have preached and practiced Christian baptism like any other preacher of the gospel, and it would not have been true that he knew "only the baptism of John." He knew the great facts concerning Jesus and believed him to be the Messiah, but he did not know—what the Commission contained—that, having received "all authority in heaven and on earth," he demanded the surrender of every soul to him, and an entrance into spiritual union with him. He knew what Jesus *was*, but he did not know what the enthroned Christ *wanted* of men.

Now, the twelve men, who had probably heard Apollos, seem to have stood in just that position. They knew the facts about Jesus and believed in his Messiahship, and in this sense—the only sense which they knew to be required—claimed to be his disciples; but they *did not know what this Messiah wanted of them.* They did not know that, as the enthroned representative of Deity, he demanded complete submission to him, full commitment to him, and entrance into an intimate spiritual union with him (or they would have known of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which was connected with that step); and they had made no such surrender, and formed no such union. This was what they lacked. They were disciples in the sense of being believers in the Messiahship, but not in the sense the Commission required, or they would have known what Apollos did not know—more than "the baptism of John." Now, Paul tells them that John's requirement was, that those receiving his baptism should "*believe on*" the Messiah when he should come. What did these words mean? Listen! "And when they heard this

[this was the *cause* of their action] they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." It was *this* statement, says Luke, that caused these men to be baptized. But how could it do so unless this believing on Jesus embraced baptism? Did the men understand the meaning of the phrase? If not, it was explained to them; but Luke informs us that it was the content of *this* statement that caused them to be baptized. What baptism meant they knew from John's baptism. They knew that it meant surrender, submission to God, and consecration to his service; and they now did this—the very thing they lacked—to Christ. But were they not baptized as a result of further instruction from Paul? No; for Luke tells us that it was from hearing *this*. Thus it appears that, *in the apostolic age, the command to* BELIEVE ON (εἰς) *the Lord Jesus Christ caused men to be baptized.*

Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, when spoken of those who had never known anything of him, undoubtedly embraced the initial step of intellectual conviction; but with those who had already taken this step, it as certainly embraced what remained to be done—personal surrender to Christ as possessing "all authority in heaven and in earth" (Mt. xxviii. 18), and entrance into spiritual union with him in an act of solemn profession, spoken of as being *baptized into* him, in which act the Holy Spirit met the candidate in the consummation of a spiritual union, and remained as an abiding guest. This spiritual step was not taken in John's baptism, nor was it required, or even possible, before Jesus' enthronement in heaven. It was never commanded before the Great Commission, and even then the apostles were not permitted to proclaim it until after Jesus' coronation and his send-

ing forth of the Holy Spirit upon them (Acts i. 4, 5).

Just what John's disciples lacked of Christian conversion is entirely plain, and it was precisely this that John called *believing on* Christ. And this believing on Christ was in this instance accomplished by baptism into his name (*v.* 5), thus placing in baptism precisely the same spiritual content that the Scriptures everywhere give to it.

But if John bade all his disciples *believe on* the Messiah when he should come, and if this included baptism, would it not have required a rebaptism of all his disciples? No; for believing on him did not necessarily embrace baptism, but *profession*, and would properly embrace baptism only when that was the appointed means of profession. During Christ's personal ministry persons became his disciples in such way as he thought fitting under the conditions; but in the Great Commission baptism, with its deep spiritual content, became the great act of profession, and was made binding upon all; and all who had not previously become his disciples were to become so in the appointed way.*

*It has been thought by some that, as no mention is made of the rebaptism of Apollos, it did not take place; but neither is there any mention in the entire Book of Acts of verbal confession of Christ's name, though we cannot doubt that it took place in the cases of conversion related. The "common opinion" (so says Meyer) has been that Aquila baptized Apollos when he instructed him regarding Christian baptism, and this is the view of Hackett and Plumptree. If, to escape the difficulty of the silence of the narrative at this point, we claim that Apollos was not rebaptized, we encounter other difficulties in explaining why baptism was administered to the twelve men, and not to him. It has been suggested, as a reason, that Apollos may have been baptized while John's baptism was still in force and that these men had received it after it had ceased to be valid; but Paul, in pointing out the insufficiency of their baptism, speaks of John's baptism as administered by himself, and not as an obsolete institution. Meyer's suggestion that the matter of rebaptism may have been

Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, in the apostolic age, included baptism; and the command to believe on him *caused* men to be baptized.

Now, this fact has some very important bearings. Here is an expression whose content on the lips of Paul, and in his practice, includes baptism. In his great argument on justification in the Roman and Galatian letters he makes faith the condition of justification, and he describes that faith as a *believing on* (εἰς) Christ. In Galatians he says: "Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on (εἰς) Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law" (Gal. ii. 16). That is, he describes the faith that is the condition of justification in language which, if uttered to a body of men in that age, would have caused them to be baptized. What, then, must be said of the claim, so widely made, that Paul's doc-

optional with the converts seems hardly probable, since baptism was not a mere ceremony, but a profound spiritual act, which was either called for, or not. If John's baptism fulfilled the purpose of Christian baptism, rebaptism was improper; if not, Christian baptism was needed and should have been required. It *was* required of all persons who had not become Christ's disciples before the giving of the Commission. Peter's command to the Pentecostians who asked what they should do was not general, but particular. His language was, "Repent ye, and be baptized *every one of you*," etc. This includes all to whom he was speaking. If any of Christ's disciples were in the audience, Peter was not addressing them, for he had not charged *them* with the guilt of Christ's condemnation (v. 36), *they* were not "pricked in their heart," *they* did not cry "out what shall we do?" and therefore *they* were not addressed in the answer to that question. They had been discipled and, not needing to be discipled again, did not need the discipling act. But of those whom Peter addressed he *commanded* EVERY ONE to be baptized. The very design of such language is to cut off exceptions. John's disciples in that audience—and there may have been many—were *commanded* to be baptized.

trine of justification by faith excludes baptism as a condition of justification, when in the Pauline usage it distinctly *includes* it?

This is not all. In the same passage this faith is spoken of as "faith in Jesus Christ"—or, literally, justification is declared to be "through faith of Christ Jesus" (διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ). Now, in Romans iii. 22, Paul speaks of justification in the same way, as taking place "through faith of Christ" (διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). Thus the "faith of Christ," which is made the condition of justification in both Romans and Galatians, is but another name for *believing on* Christ, which in Pauline usage includes baptism.

This inclusion of baptism in the content of that faith which is reckoned for righteousness is not inconsistent with Paul's doctrine of justification by faith without works, for he distinctly excludes baptism from the category of works. In Titus iii. 5 he says: "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration [baptism] and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Baptism is here represented, like the bestowment of the Spirit, as God's act,—which it certainly is through the hand of the administrator,—and is declared to be not a work of righteousness done by ourselves. This is unquestionably correct; for in so far as baptism is a work at all, it is the act of another. What the candidate does in baptism is to put on Christ and enter into union with him; and this is simply *faith*. Justification by baptism is purely justification by faith. Thus, the introduction of baptism does not affect the pure spirituality of the condition of justification.

The men spoken of in Acts xix. 1-7, lacked a great

spiritual step,—surrender to Christ, spiritually putting on Christ, entering into spiritual union with Christ,—and Paul's language places this spiritual step in baptism (Rom. vi. 1-7; Gal. iii. 26, 27). That it really took place there in Paul's time, is shown by the fact that the command to take this spiritual step—to believe on the Lord Jesus—was obeyed by being baptized into his name. Or we may turn the light of this fact in another direction, for facts teach many lessons. These men seem to have believed in the Messiahship of Jesus; but they did not know what he wanted of them, for they knew nothing of the Commission. To believe *on* the Lord Jesus, therefore, means what these men lacked—surrender, entrance into spiritual union with Christ, baptism.

Make what use of it we may, the fact stands that in the apostolic age the command to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ *caused* men to be baptized; and it should do so now.

Let us now pass to the consideration of another phrase, which occurs a few times in Acts and the epistle to the Romans. It differs from the phrase just considered only in the substitution of ἐπί for εἰς. We can best examine its meaning in connection with a passage in Acts which is often quoted. After the earthquake at Philippi, in answer to the jailer's question, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answer: "Believe on (ἐπί) the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31).

At the very threshold of our investigation we are met by a strange fact. There are three passages in the Acts of Apostles in which the answer to the

question, what to do to be saved, is given. These are Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16, and the passage we are now considering. The strange fact is this: The answer of Paul and Silas to the jailer is universally used as the answer to inquirers, in all revival meetings, by those who regard saving faith as preceding baptism, while neither of the other answers is *ever* used. Yet, unless they disagree, the language of all these passages must be, with their contexts, but different expressions of the same thought. Why, then, is the answer of Acts xvi. 31 always chosen and that of the other two passages excluded (for when the question has been pressed, it has been found that there was decided objection to their use with inquirers)? I can conceive of but one explanation of this remarkable fact, viz., that the language of Acts xvi. 31 lends itself more readily to a private interpretation, but that that interpretation is not the correct one, or the other passages would be equally acceptable.

The phrases πιστεύειν ἐπὶ and πιστεύειν εἰς are regarded by scholars as possessing the same meaning. They are rendered by both the Authorized and Revised Versions by the same words (*believe on*); the same sense is given to them in Thayer's *N. T. Lexicon;* and Winer gives them the same definition, including profession, especially in Acts ix. 42 and xxii. 19.* In the former of these passages it is evident that the phrase refers to the act of becoming Christians, or professed believers, just as the simple word "believed" does in ch. ii. 44; in the latter, it is plain that *professed* believers are meant, as Saul's persecution was certainly directed against only those whom he

Grammar of N. T. Greek, §31, 5.

knew to be believers, and such knowledge came through their profession. The phrase (πιστεύειν ἐπί) was therefore familiarly used to express the entire process of conversion, including profession.

Before proceeding to a particular examination of this phrase as used in Acts xvi. 31, let us inquire regarding the scope of its application. Did it express a *part* of what it was necessary for the jailer to do in order to be saved, or did it embrace his *entire* duty in order to salvation? It is the answer given to his direct question, "What must I do to be saved?" and should naturally embrace his entire duty to that end; and that it did so is made more evident by the immediately succeeding assurance, "and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." The language is equivalent to: Do this, and thou shalt be saved; and the statement would not be true if believing on the Lord Jesus included only part of the condition of salvation. What, then, does the language mean?

The phrase in question is composed of two words: πιστεύειν, meaning *to believe* or *trust*, and ἐπί, *on* or *upon;* and the action is represented as terminating, not on a truth or proposition, but on a person. The meaning would thus be, *to rest one's faith upon, rely upon*, or *trust, a person*. Taken in the ordinary sense of the words of which it is composed, this is all that the phrase means. The jailer felt that he had offended the God whom Paul and Silas worshipped, and, filled with alarm, he inquired what he must do to turn away his anger and escape its consequences. This is the answer they give him. Now, the first thing that strikes us in this answer is that it contains *no moral element*. The jailer could fulfil this condition without any change of heart or character. The highwayman

relies upon, or trusts, his bandit chief or his fellow robber. The simple act of relying upon another is not at all incompatible with the blackest crimes. If Christ has made this simple act the condition of salvation, the condition is one that has nothing to do with character, and may be performed by any one, good or bad. This is all the language of Paul means, taken in its ordinary sense; and the jailer may have so understood it at the time. But the entire religious world is of the opinion that it means more than this —that the phrase is pregnant with a larger meaning than the simple sense of the words requires.* There can be no doubt about the correctness of this view, but it brings us to two very important questions: How do we reach this larger meaning? and what is it?

We are here confronted with one of the most seductive perils of the interpreter. It is easy to supply the supposed meaning out of our own doctrinal preconceptions, and yet fail to be conscious that we are not interpreting, but perverting, the Scripture. Our general estimate of Christianity leads us to believe that the passage cannot teach the moral monstrosity of a conversion without repentance, but just what and how much pregnant force we are to attribute to this phrase does not so readily appear. It is certain that, if our interpretation is to be of any value, we must be guided by some principle, and apply it consistently.

As our object is not to read some meaning of our own into the passage, but to ascertain the meaning of the one who uttered it, and as that meaning is not comprehended in the words of the phrase he used, *we must look for it either in the context or in his other*

*Winer takes the phrase as pregnant, and gives it a wider sense than is even implied in the construction.—*Grammar,* §31, 5.

utterances on the subject. Here is our principle, and we must apply it faithfully. What, then, of the context? We read: "And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house." What they spake to him we are not told, but it was certainly the gospel that Paul preached to sinners; and we are thus directed to the contents of that gospel. Moreover, as Paul did not preach a different gospel from that of the other apostles, we may consult their teaching also as sources of information, as well as the teaching of Christ himself. In all these we find abundant evidence that *repentance* is a condition of salvation, and we may be sure that neither Paul nor any other apostle will state any condition of salvation that omits it. Thus we are fully warranted in claiming that the faith that Paul required of the jailer was a *moral* and *loyal* faith. But it must not be forgotten how we reach this conclusion, and we must be true to the principle that has conducted us to it. Our only means of knowing that this faith possessed a moral content is the teaching of other Scriptures on the subject. Now, does the application of this principle carry us any farther? The Scriptures declare as clearly and positively that baptism is a condition of salvation, or remission of sins, as they do that repentance is. There are no clearer or more definite statements in the New Testament than those of Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16, and 1 Pet. iii. 21, with others that might be named; and were methods similar to those used to break the natural force of these passages applied to those which make repentance a condition of salvation, it is questionable whether they could stand against them. But why try so to interpret these passages regarding baptism as to eliminate

its conditionality? The reason usually urged is that they must be made to agree with such statements as that contained in Acts xvi. 31. But what that passage means is precisely what we are trying to find out, and our only means of doing so is by ascertaining the teachings of other passages on the subject. We start out to do this, and take what we like, and throw away what we do not want. This is not interpretation. *The same method that puts a moral element into the faith of Acts xvi. 31 puts baptism into it also.* This playing fast and loose with principles of interpretation will enable us conveniently to find what we want in the Scriptures, but will make it forever impossible to arrive at their true meaning. Paul himself places baptism ("the washing of regeneration," Tit. iii. 5*) among the conditions of salvation, that is, in the very area which he makes faith cover in his answer to the jailer. Moreover, when he spoke "the word of the Lord," which explained to the jailer what was meant by believing on the Lord Jesus, the "jailer took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, immediately." The speaking of the word of the Lord to inquirers always resulted in immediate baptism in

*The genuineness of the pastoral epistles has been largely questioned by the more radical school of critics; but the objections urged against them are mainly internal, and these are now being widely regarded as invalid. Prof. Geo. B. Stevens says that "more conservative German scholars, and English scholars generally, hold to the genuineness of the first ten Paulines, and most of them regard the Pastorals also as genuine." "Zahn in his *Einleitung* defends the genuineness of all the Paulines."—*Theology of the New Testament*, p. 326.

Dr. J. H. Barnard in his work on *The Pastoral Epistles*, says that "there is no adequate reason forbidding us to acquiesce in their own claim, confirmed by the unbroken tradition of the Christian church, that they were written by the hand of St. Paul."—*Biblical World*, Sept., 1900, p. 228.

the apostolic age; *it does not do so where the faith that saves is regarded as reaching its consummation before baptism.*

The question then stands thus: The principle of interpretation which makes believing on the Lord Jesus, in this passage, include repentance, makes it include baptism also; and if we reject this we must, to be consistent, reject also the moral and spiritual element of faith, thus bringing a profound moral disaster to Christianity. The jailer's believing on the Lord Jesus included his baptism, and it is thus that *after* his baptism, he "rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God." His believing on the Lord Jesus was consummated in his baptism.

We may add that it is entirely consistent that this should be so. If baptism is, as it was regarded by Paul, not a mere outward or physical act, but the putting on of Christ (Gal. iii. 27) and entering into union with him (Rom. vi. 5), it embraces the last spiritual step in conversion—a step also which is of the very nature of faith; and it would be even surprising had Paul not included it in the process of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, or had excluded it from the conditions of salvation. The omission of such a step from the meaning of this phrase would have been little less amazing than the omission of repentance.

We are now prepared to consider another important fact. In Paul's argument on justification in the fourth chapter of Romans, he designates the faith which is reckoned for righteousness by the same term that he uses in Acts xvi. 31. Having spoken of Abraham's faith having been reckoned for righteousness, he says (Rom. iv. 5): "But to him that worketh not, but

believeth on (ἐπὶ) him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." Again, in the 23d and 24th verses, having described Abraham's faith, he says: "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on (ἐπὶ) him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead," etc. In these two passages Paul designates the faith that is reckoned for righteousness by the very same phrase that he has used (Acts xvi. 31) to cover ground which he himself declares (Titus iii. 5) to include baptism. In Acts xvi. 31 he tells what one must do to be saved, and in Titus iii. 5 he declares baptism to be a condition of salvation. In view of this fact, we may say that so far is it from being true that Paul's doctrine of justification by faith excludes baptism, that a fair consideration of all his statements on the subject leads directly to the conclusion that the faith that justifies includes baptism. And with this all that he says is consistent; for he definitely excludes baptism from the category of works (Titus iii. 5), and places in it a spiritual element which conditions justification, viz., putting on Christ (Gal. iii. 26) and entering into union with him (Rom. vi. 5).

Thus, an examination of the content of both of the phrases (πιστεύειν εἰς and πιστεύειν ἐπὶ) by which he designates the faith that justifies leads to one conclusion—that he includes baptism in his condition of justification.

By the preceding examination I think it has been established:

1. That personal, possessive faith in Christ does not, under any of its designations, in the teaching and

practice of the apostles, take place before baptism.

2. That the terms by which this faith is commonly designated were used by the apostles to *include* baptism. The severance of faith from baptism in justification and salvation is without Scripture warrant.

CHAPTER V.

ST. PAUL'S CONVERSION.

The textual proofs presented in the last chapter do not exhaust our evidence on the relation of baptism to justifying faith. There remains still another class of evidence quite different in character, relating not to the meaning of words, but to the meaning of facts. The Acts of the Apostles furnishes us with the history of the execution of the Great Commission given by Christ, by the men whom he had chosen and fitted for that purpose. It aims to deal with facts rather than with sayings, or with sayings only so far as they form part of the facts presented. It is not theoretical; it is not didactic, only as facts themselves are the greatest of teachers. It is illustrative; it is the practical application of the Commission. It is, or should be, the revivalist's handbook. It presents with more or less of detail the records of many conversions. It recounts the acts of men whose mission and occupation it was to convert. So largely does it deal with the work of conversion that it might not unfitly be called the Book of Conversions. It is the best and most complete commentary on the Commission. It is to the Commission what the laboratory is to the verbal teaching of chemistry. It does not simply *tell* us how to convert men, but *shows* us how; and in its master strokes of historic delineation answers a thousand questions unthought-of even by the writer. We stand in great meetings; behold men shaken by the truth of the gospel writhing in the agonies of conviction. We hear their cry of pain and of anxious

inquiry. Their case is our own. We know where they stand and how they feel. Like a voice out of heaven comes the apostolic answer to them, clear, distinct, unmistakable. It is *our* answer, *our pattern*. To the plain words of the Commission are added these plain facts of its execution. Protestantism is Protestant with respect to all but the Acts of the Apostles. It has not been true to that book. When it shall take the models of conversion therein presented as its own, it will be far on its way to Christian unity.

Among the accounts of conversion recorded in the Acts, there is none fraught with more of interest, and which is more instructive in its bearings on important questions than that of the apostle Paul. There is none, moreover, given with more of detail. It is related once by Luke and twice by Paul himself, under different circumstances, calling different features to the front.

Few events in the history of the human race have so profoundly affected mankind as the conversion of the apostle Paul. It gave to primitive Christianity its first scholar, its profoundest intellect, and its greatest apostle. It has shaped the thought of nineteen centuries, and furnished the fiery weapons of the Great Reformation. It brought the human intellect to the feet of Christ. It was Christianity conquering on the battlefield of thought. Apart from the death and resurrection of Christ, it was the most momentous event of that century, if not of any century.

Not for this, however, do we speak of it at this time, but for another reason: The conversion of St. Paul was the *fons et origo* of his theology. The heart makes the theologian, and out of the deep fountain of Paul's own experience sprang his conception of

the Christian religion. The conversion of St. Paul is the best of all commentaries on his epistles. Out of the fervid heats of this tremendous event the Books of Romans and Galatians were cast. Paul's writings are not speculative. They are the play of the intellect over the throbbing, quickening experiences of his own life. They lie close upon fact; they are not simply revelation even, but partake of the character and certitude of science.

With reverence let us ascend into the holy mount where this great soul found its transfiguration, and listen to words almost too sacred to be uttered. Let us behold this event in its terrors, in its struggles, and in its final peace. Would there were more conversions like it in our day!

Saul was the arch-persecutor of his time. He had undertaken to exterminate Christianity. His task was not uncongenial to him. His heart was in it. He was "exceedingly mad" against his victims and went to his task "breathing forth threatenings and slaughter" against them. Though fortified by conscience, there was in his anger the fierce passion of a maddened animal. He demanded the renunciation of Christ; and those whom he could not induce to blaspheme, were committed to prison or even to death. When they were condemned he gave his voice against them. He was in the audience that stoned Stephen, and kept the clothes of the executioners, being *particeps criminis* in his martyrdom. Having made havoc of the church in and about Jerusalem, he followed the refugees who had escaped him to strange cities. He at length obtains letters from the high priest to go to Damascus, and bring all incorrigibles bound to Jerusalem for punishment. As his company neared

the city, about noon, a great light lightened around them, and they were thrown to the ground. Saul heard a voice saying to him in the "Hebrew" tongue, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" The voice said to him, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Saul replied, "What shall I do, Lord?" The answer was: "Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do."

Having arisen from the ground, Saul found that he was blind, and was led by his attendants into the city, where he remained at the house of Judas for three days without food or drink. At length he beheld in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him that he might receive his sight. About that time also the Lord visited Ananias and instructed him to go to Saul, announcing the object. But Ananias was afraid, having known of Saul's career, and being apprised of the nature of his mission to Damascus. The Lord assured him by stating to him the facts of which he was still ignorant, and bade him go. Ananias visits Saul, and, having announced his mission, restores his sight, and then says: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." Having done this, Saul partook of food and was strengthened.

These are the main facts connected with Saul's conversion, briefly stated. What do they import? Many things. Many important questions center in this occurrence, and receive light from it.

The one which we may most conveniently consider first is that concerning Saul's baptism. The command

to him was to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins calling on his (Christ's) name. The natural import of such language is plain. It can convey no other meaning than that, under the figure of the washing of water, Saul was to receive remission of sins in baptism.* We believe that any fair construction of this language is impossible upon the assumption that Saul's sins had already been remitted. But it is not our purpose to undertake any exegetical examination of the passage, nor to consider any of those methods which are resorted to to turn it aside from its more obvious meaning. All such efforts have their origin in the belief that Saul's conversion was consummated at the time of his meeting with Christ on the Damascus road, and that his sins were therefore *then* pardoned, making it necessary to find some way to dispose of this awkwardly plain passage connecting remission of sins with baptism. When one finds it necessary to explain away such language as this, it should cause him to pause and inquire anew whether he has rightly apprehended the conditions of the case. It is of *this* that we purpose to inquire; and when we shall have learned the facts and noted their bearing, perhaps we shall not desire to find any other meaning than the obvious one for the language of this passage.

§*I. A Moral Question.*

Saul was guilty of a great crime against the church

*Dr. Hackett, the noted Baptist commentator, says of this passage: "The clause states a result of baptism, in language derived from the nature of that ordinance. It answers to *eis aphesin hamartioon* in Acts ii. 38, i. e., submit to the rite in order to be forgiven. In both passages baptism is represented as having this importance or efficacy, because it is the sign of the repentance and faith which are the conditions of salvation."—Hackett's *Com. on Acts, in loco.*

of Jesus Christ. He had imprisoned many of its members, and delivered others to death. He was engaged in the work of exterminating Christianity. The physical evils which he brought upon the church did not, however, measure the extent of his wrong. These were but a means to an end. The object sought was to drive as many as possible from their profession, and prevent any others from becoming Christians. He could not *shut* the door of the kingdom of heaven, but he did *barricade* it with imprisonment and death. During Christ's earthly ministry many were kept from becoming his disciples even by the threat of the rulers to turn them out of the synagogue. None but souls of the most heroic mold could pass such a barrier as Saul had erected against the church. Thousands were almost certainly being kept from Christ by the reign of terror which Saul had inaugurated. The door of the kingdom was closed to all but the most heroic, and Christianity was made a crime worthy of death by the very guides to whom the people had been wont to look with confidence for spiritual guidance. Saul was engaged in this very work of persecution when Christ struck him to the earth, and charged home his crime upon him. This stopped his operations and stayed the blow that was about to fall upon the church at Damascus, but *it did not put an end to the reign of terror and remove the barricade against the church of Christ.* The men who were with Saul had heard a sound as of a voice, but they had not distinguished the words that were spoken. The occurrence, to them, was a strange and inexplicable mystery. We have no information that Saul communicated to them what he had heard, and we have no reason to think he did. He was not

in a mood for talking, especially to these men, who were subalterns. Besides, the end was not yet, even in his own mind. Not one word had yet been spoken about his own salvation, and he was waiting for further light. He was not yet ready to talk to such men. At least, we may say that the account furnishes no evidence that he did.

On reaching the city he secures lodging with a man named Judas.* There he remains for three days, but the reign of terror continues. The barricade against the door of Christ's kingdom is not removed. One decisive word from Saul to the disciples at Damascus would have removed it. That word is not spoken. The church has its first news of any change in Saul, direct from heaven. No doubt, rumor had brought them news of the marvelous occurrence on the road to Damascus. They knew that the lion had been wounded, and supposed him lying in his lair; and they awaited with trembling the moment when he should spring upon them. With reasons why Saul did not have some such decisive communication with the church at Damascus, we are not at present concerned. It is sufficient for the present to note that he

*The assumption that Judas was a disciple has nothing in its favor. Indeed, the facts are against it. Saul could not have gained admission to the house of a disciple, unless he had professed himself a changed man, and even then he would have been suspected. But had he been quartered with a disciple for three days, who had been made acquainted with all the facts, is it probable that the other disciples of Damascus, who were living in mortal terror because of this man, should not have found it out? Yet, after three days, Ananias, probably the most prominent disciple in the city, had not yet heard of it, and was first apprised of what had happened by a vision from heaven. Judas was a Jew, as his name imports, but there is no reason to suppose that, in seeking lodgings, Saul had aimed at anything further than a convenient place where he might have the desired accommodations.

did not, and that the reign of terror continued. *The crime against the church of Jesus Christ was still being perpetuated.* Its door is still barricaded. Men are still being driven away from Chri-t. One decisive word from Saul would end the mischief. That word is not spoken.

Now let us ask the question whether that man was pardoned when Christ met him on the road to Damascus. Further, was he pardoned during the three days of silence and waiting at Damascus? Was he pardoned while he was perpetuating a crime? If so, his pardon was immoral

But, are we entirely just to Saul? Does not the narrative warrant us in saying that he was not *wilfully* perpetuating any wrong? Let this be admitted, and the question still returns upon us: Shall he be pardoned while perpetuating a wrong, on the ground that he does not realize it? or shall he not rather be made to realize his wrong, and then be pardoned when he forsakes it? Shall the sinner's moral standard form the ground of the divine acceptance, or shall God's? Shall the sinner or God determine the conditions of pardon? When the apostles go forth to convert the nations sunk in the depths of moral pollution, shall they admit them to all the privileges of the redeemed, while continuing in the practice of the grossest immoralities, and even crimes, because forsooth they do not realize their degradation, and some of their grossest vices are not only not considered sinful, but are even sanctioned by the religions they have been taught? Is conversion to be a mere making up with God, regardless of the moral grounds on which it rests? If such were the character of Christianity it would merit the contempt of every righteous

man. Such is not its character. It rests on the foundation of a true righteousness. It has led and educated the conscience of the world for nineteen centuries; it has been more moral than the best morality of every age; and in its pure, sweet fountains the noblest of men are yet to find undreamed-of wealth of moral inspiration. We can accept no such low standard in the decision of this case. If Saul does not realize that he is perpetuating a great wrong, he must be brought to realize it, and forsake it, before he is pardoned. There is no other Christian way, no other *moral* way. To pardon a man while he is perpetuating his sin is to wrong the man and sanction his sin. If Saul does not realize that he is perpetuating a great wrong, it may mitigate the enormity of his guilt; but to declare him pardoned on that ground, is to smirch the moral character of Christianity and belie the very fundamental principles of its nature. Saul cannot be pardoned on this ground. There is a crime to be disposed of. It hangs there a black, awful reality between him and Heaven, No fanciful *legerdemain* can wave it aside. Let us beware of trampling down moral distinctions. That cloud will stay till it can be removed without moral dishonor to Christianity. *That man must stop the perpetuation of that crime before he can be pardoned.*

But have we yet reached the exact situation? Are we really to account for Saul's silence on the ground of ignorance? Had he not met Christ in the way and asked him what he should do? and had not Christ directed him to proceed to Damascus, where the information would be imparted? and was Saul not therefore now waiting for a revelation of the divine will? Does not this shift the responsibility from his

shoulders? If it does (and it certainly does modify it), where does it place it? Is Christ to be made responsible for the perpetuation of a great wrong? Is he to ignore it and grant full pardon to the offender, admit him to divine sonship, and to all the privileges of the redeemed, without even informing him that the wrong must be terminated? This would be to shift the wrong where we can least afford to place it—on Christ himself. To shift the responsibility for a wrong is not to discharge it, and Saul's crime is not a mere fancy to be dispelled by some makeshift. It must be *stopped*, or pardon itself would be immoral. It is *not* stopped. The reign of terror continues. Some decisive word or act from Saul must stop it. No makeshifts, of whatever nature, can avail while the great crime thunders on. Somebody is to blame. Or, if Saul is wading through the deep waters of a repentance not yet completed, and is therefore not yet ready for action, we must say also that he is not yet ready for pardon. If he has been already pardoned while perpetuating a crime, that pardon is a stain on the fair face of Christianity.

Let us suppose that an apostle goes to preach the gospel to a heathen city where his hearers are addicted to the vilest immoralities. He preaches to them of the true and living God; of his holiness, and hatred of sin; of the resurrection; of judgment; of Christ; of heaven; and of the punishment of the wicked. They believe his message to be true, and cry out: "Sir, what shall we do?" Suppose the apostle responds that he will tell them after a time; but that they may be assured in the meantime that they are pardoned, and admitted to the honors of divine sonship and all the blessings of the redeemed. Suppose, then, that

some time afterward he informs them that their immoralities must be forsaken if they are to *continue* in the divine favor, what should we say of thus admitting these heathen to pardon while in the practice of their sins without even informing them that they must be stopped? And, if circumstances made it necessary for the apostle to defer his answer to their question, would he be justified in assuring them that they were already pardoned while their sins were being perpetuated? What we are supposing these heathen to do, is what Saul had done. He had come to believe in the Messiahship of Jesus, and cried out. "What shall I do?" He was not guilty of immoralities, but he was guilty of a crime for which he afterward regarded himself the chief of sinners; and his crime, in some of its most essential features, was still being perpetuated. For a good reason Christ's answer to his question was deferred. But was he then pardoned? Is it any better to pardon a man while he is perpetuating a crime, than while continuing a life of immorality, even though both are ignorantly done? We cannot commit Christianity to such a moral monstrosity as this.

One of the golden words of the Sermon on the Mount was this: "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Mt. v. 23, 24). Had the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ anything against Saul when Christ met him in the way to Damascus? Had he done them any wrong? Had he done anything to make right that wrong? If not, can he now come and offer himself upon the altar

of the divine service, and be accepted? Will not this passage bid him go his way, first make right his wrong with those still trembling with terror because of him, and then come and offer himself for divine acceptance? If a few unkind words, as in this passage (Mt. v. 22), will shut heaven against the user until the wrong be undone, what shall be said of a crime like Saul's? Shall Christ ignore a fundamental principle of his own kingdom, and accept this man in the midst of this great wrong? If so, we shall seek in vain for any case to which this language of his great sermon can justly apply.

But how shall Saul put an end to this great wrong? I answer, BY PROFESSION. This will stop the reign of terror. This will remove the barricade which he has built against the door of Christ's kingdom. This will bring peace where now there is terror, joy where now there is sorrow. Saul has asked Christ what he shall do. When the answer comes, it commands him to do just this thing, that he may be pardoned. He is baptized, and says in a loud voice, heard in Damascus, heard at Jerusalem, heard in Rome, heard in heaven, heard through nineteen centuries, heard till the last hour of time: "I am no longer against you, but with you. Here, bleeding church, is my own life. Take it, use it, let it be quenched, if need be, for thy sake and the Redeemer's. Bitter tears have I shed over my wrong against thee. My all I now give thee."—It is finished. The wave of sorrow rolling over the suffering church is stayed. The black cloud of persecution has vanished; and Ananias, as swiftly as feet can bear him, speeds to his mourning and anxious brethren, bearing the glad news that the great persecutor is kneeling at the feet of their Redeemer. And then

—that mighty voice which was to shake all nations was heard in Damascus proclaiming the name of Christ.

If ever there was a great moral act, Saul's baptism was one. A mere empty ceremony! When Abraham Lincoln struck the chains from four million bondmen, was that a mere empty ceremony? Saul's baptism struck a more terrible sorrow from the church of Jesus Christ, and ended a mighty wrong crying to Heaven for redress. Saul's baptism was as much a moral act as the return of stolen property, and a thousand times more demanded.

A man has maliciously set fire to a dwelling. As he sees the flames mounting upward, and wrapping in their fiery embrace the sleeping inmates, he relents, and falls upon his knees praying God to forgive him, but utters no cry to awake the sleeping victims, and sounds no alarm to call others to the rescue. That man's very silence is murder. Must we assure him of pardon? Yes, if Saul may now be pardoned, while delaying to raise the blockade against Christ's church, and stop the mischief his silence is hourly working. Let us be thankful, in the name of morality, that Acts xxii. 16 reads as it does. Not till his profession did Saul do anything to put an end to the perpetuation of his wrong, and *not till then could he be rightly pardoned.*

§2. *The Inner History of Paul's Conversion, and its Bearing on his Doctrine.*

Having considered the conversion of the apostle Paul objectively and in a certain relation to moral law, let us now endeavor to trace its inner history. And, first, let us ask, Did all the mental steps of that

conversion take place at the time of Saul's meeting with Christ on the way to Damascus?

He was, as we have seen, the deadly enemy of Christ's church, and was engaged, with all the energy of his nature, in a war of extermination against it. His mission was self-chosen; his heart was in it, and he felt that he was doing God's service. Neither in the narratives in the Acts, nor in his subsequent references to this period of his life, are there indications that he had any misgivings regarding his course.* The language of Christ to him, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goads," has been thought to indicate that he was resisting the goadings of conscience: but, surely, this finds its best interpretation in what had just happened. Saul had been, not only resisting the gospel of Christ, but fighting against him in seeking to destroy his kingdom: and now, there he lies, stricken down as by a thunderbolt from heaven. The ox which kicked against the goad did but wound

*Dr. Lechler, author of *Lange's Commentary on Acts*, says: "So, too, it is assumed that doubts had already arisen in the soul of Saul, before the appearance near Damascus was seen, and that his conscience was engaged in a violent struggle, occasioned by observations which he had made in the cases of Stephen and other Christians whom he had persecuted. But not the least trace of such a state of mind can be found in the several narratives; we are, on the contrary, most distinctly informed that Saul's fanaticism retained all its violence, and that his views and sentiments were by no means changed; but that the appearance had suddenly arrested his steps, taught him to reflect, and turned him from his course. With this statement every remark will be found to harmonize, which Paul himself makes in his Epistles, respecting his conversion and the previous state of his mind."—*Com., in loco.*

Prof. Geo. B. Stevens says: "There is no hint of any hesitation in his [Saul's] course, or of any gradually changing convictions regarding the claims of Jesus; all the testimony which bears upon the subject implies the contrary. He was, to the end of his course as a persecutor, firm, persevering, and conscientious in his efforts to exterminate Christianity." *Pauline Theology*, p. 10.

itself. There lay Saul, helpless, trembling, blind. His resistance had brought him to this. He has undertaken an impossible task.* He tells us distinctly (Acts xxvi. 9) that he verily thought with himself that he *ought* to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. He was acting in accordance with the convictions of his conscience, not against them. True, he came afterwards to regard himself as the chief of sinners, but he did not think so now; and he afterward explains that he obtained mercy because he did what he did *ignorantly* and in unbelief. Concerning his executioners Christ had prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." As with them, Saul knew not what he did; and this mitigating circumstance was regarded by him as a ground of his forgiveness. It seems evident that all the feelings of sympathy for his victims, and all the natural remonstrances of his nature were silenced by the sense that he was performing a religious duty in crushing out a heresy which, from its rapid growth, threatened the very overthrow of the Jewish religion. It was not *against* conscience that Saul was striving, but *in fulfillment of its behests.* No other view finds any countenance in either his language or that of his historian.

Having now been successful in his enterprise in and about Jerusalem, he is pursuing the refugees to distant parts, and is on his way to Damascus to bring all Christians who shall refuse to renounce their religion to Jerusalem for punishment. As he nears the city the brilliant light from heaven casts him to the

*Meyer has: "*It is for thee a difficult undertaking*, surpassing thy strength, and not to be accomplished by thee, *that thou*, as my persecutor, *shouldst contend against my will.*"—*Com., in loco.*

ground, and he sees the form of a heavenly visitant, and hears the words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He replies, "Who art thou, Lord?" The answer is, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." He then says, "What shall I do, Lord?" and is directed to go on to Damascus, where it shall be told him of all things which were appointed for him to do.

Here are the facts. Have all the steps of Saul's conversion now taken place? That he has one of the elements of faith there can be no doubt. He believes that Jesus is the Messiah, the exalted and glorified Lord. He has been stricken with terror, and has received one sharp sword-thrust of conviction, and has cried out, "What shall I do?" Do these facts warrant us in concluding that he has not only believed the truth, but repented and entered into union with Christ, appropriating his salvation, and resting in him in the confidence of an intimate personal faith?

Another case strikingly similar to this may help us in deciding this question. On the day of Pentecost the miraculous advent and manifestations of the Holy Spirit call together a curious multitude. Peter delivers a sermon explaining the miracle, and proving it to be a fulfilment of prophecy; and shows from the Jewish Scriptures that the things that had befallen Jesus were matters of inspired prediction; and proves, finally, that that same Jesus whom they had crucified had been "made both Lord and Christ." "And when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart" and cried out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Here we have: (1) a miracle; (2) its explanation, proving the Messiahship and exaltation of Jesus; (3) alarm and compunction of conscience; and (4) this mental pain

resulting in an earnest inquiry what to do. What step had Saul taken, when he uttered these very words, which these Pentecostians had not taken? Does his inquiry what to do imply his repentance? It must then also imply that of the Pentecostians. Had Saul changed his purpose? Then had they also. Did his question imply self-surrender? Then it must also have implied theirs, for they were equally sincere. These narratives are parallel; there is nothing related in the case of Saul which is not found in the case of the Pentecostians. They had both come to believe the same truth, and their state of mind recorded itself, in both cases, by precisely the same question. Is Saul saved at this point? Then, why not the Pentecostians? Were the steps of conversion completed in the case of Saul? Then why not with the Pentecostians? But what was the *status* of these Pentecostians? Peter's answer informs us: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Their conversion, it seems, was not yet completed, and they needed yet to *repent*. How can this be when they are already suffering sorrow and remorse for their course, and are earnestly seeking to know their duty that they may do it? What other mental step can such persons take? Have they not already repented? This is a very important question. It is of the greatest importance that all preachers of the gospel should understand that persons who believe the truth and present themselves sincerely with the question, What shall I do? *are not to be regarded as having repented.* A mistake here may be fatal. To pronounce men saved at a point where the Word of God does not de-

clare it, is to take an awful responsibility. What mental step, or steps, remained then for the Pentecostians to take? What does Peter mean when he commands them to "repent"? Their sorrow and compunction had reached the stage of inquiry, but had not, in connection with known duty, settled into a fixed and definite purpose to do it. Then, Peter's sermon had charged upon them but *one sin*, the rejection of Christ; and it was this *one* sin which was before their minds. They must repent of *all sins;* and, when they repent and are baptized, it must be, not for the remission of *a sin*, but of "*sins*"—*all sins*. Peter sets them at a new task, bids them ask their hearts other questions. Are they ready to repair, not only this wrong, but all wrongs? Their conversion must be, not only religious, but also moral; not simply Godward, Christward, but also manward. They have asked what they shall do regarding *this* sin, and are ready to do anything to make it right. Are they ready to make *all* wrongs right—to return ill-gotten gains, to repair all injuries, and forsake all their sins, some of which, as they carry the searchlight into their hearts, may prove to be very dear to them? Repentance, and consequent pardon, is represented in the gospel as dealing with sins, not sin. An abstract repentance is easy, and may amount to little more than a general wish to do right when it costs us nothing. Repentance must be for *sins*. They must be seen in their individuality. It is to be feared that repentance in modern conversions is often only abstract, or at least *religious* simply. With how many does it mean the righting of all wrongs, the return of all ill-gotten gains, and the giving up of every sin, however cherished? With how many does it not mean

a mere joining the church, attending its services, paying for its support, and perhaps a few other religious duties? If such be repentance, the Pentecostians had already repented when they inquired to know their duty. They had it in mind to undo a great religious sin, and serve Christ henceforth, as they had formerly denied him. Peter's answer set them to a new task. Christianity permits no mere making up with God. It is moral as well as religious, and conversion is manward as well as Godward.

Such was Peter's treatment of the case of the Pentecostians. Had he been bidden to answer Saul's question, "What shall I do?" at the moment when it was asked, what would have been his answer? Do the facts warrant us in concluding that it would have been different from that which he gave to the Pentecostians? I believe they do not The steps already taken in both cases are precisely parallel, and the question asked in each case is the same. There is no reason to think Peter would have given Saul a different answer.

In saying this, I am not unmindful of the fact that Saul's previous life had been exceptionally conscientious. If we may suppose the struggle recorded in the seventh chapter of Romans to have been drawn from his own experience, he had earnestly sought to master sin, and overcome its tendencies in his heart. Repentance, therefore, with him cannot mean just what it does for most men. He had not lived a life of either direct rebellion against the dictates of conscience, or, what is more common, of indifference regarding duty. But it must be remembered that, if repentance is for *sins*—one's *individual sins*—it can hardly be the same thing for any two persons. The

repentances of the Pentecostians must have swept over vastly different areas; and can we suppose that in that vast multitude who had made long pilgrimages from fifteen different countries for the sole purpose of worshiping God in his holy place, and in his appointed way, there were none whose lives were conscientious, and who had sincerely and earnestly tried to do right? Yet Peter's language to them was not general only, but particular: "Repent ye, and be baptized EVERY ONE OF YOU." Would he have said less to Saul, the persecutor, whose wrong against Christ was greater than that probably of any one who stood in Peter's audience? And let it be distinctly remembered that the sincere cry, "What shall I do?" is no sufficient sign of repentance, or that the person who utters it has reached the point where he may be saved. The case of Pentecost decides this matter beyond doubt.

But to return to the question of Saul's repentance: Because his former life had been exceptionally conscientious are we warranted in concluding that little or no repentance was needed in his case, save for the one wrong of persecuting the church? Is he already Christian at heart, needing only the correction of an error of the understanding to make him also one in conduct? To this we must answer with emphasis, *No.* Aside from the fact that there is no man who, under the strong light of a quickened conscience, will not find many sins of which he needs to repent, we must say positively that *conscientiousness and Christianity are not synonymous terms.*

Saul had a long journey to make *in heart* before he reached the Sermon on the Mount. His spirit and that of the true Christian were vastly different; nay,

in some most important respects, opposite. He hated with an intense hatred many of his fellowmen. He did not persecute as a father punishes his child—with pain when he smites. His task was one to which his feelings prompted him. He was "exceedingly mad against" the Christians, and went forth breathing out, in his fury, "threatening and slaughter" against his victims. A man may be conscientious and yet be far from right at heart.* Under the full sense of conviction, the idolater might feel that he was doing right, while abandoning himself to the control of the basest passions and the perpetration of the grossest wrongs; yet who would say that his state of heart was that of the Christian, and that he needed not to be converted, even in heart, before he could become a Christian. Saul has a long journey to make before he reaches the Christian state of mind.

He has now, in the midst of his unholy undertaking, been stricken to the earth, seen a glorious form, and heard terrible words from heaven. Before these words are spoken, he is already terror-stricken. These then come like a thunderbolt upon him. He responds to them almost automatically—and in a few seconds all is over. Say Conybeare and Howson: "The whole scene was evidently one of the utmost confusion, and the accounts are such as to express, in the most striking manner, the bewilderment and alarm of the travellers." Two tremendous and almost stunning blows had been struck in quick succession—the striking down by the flash from heaven,

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*Neander says that Saul's "love for the true and the good, discernable even through his errors," was "repressed by the power of his passions and prejudices."—*Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, p. 63.

and the menacing words whose meaning fell like a thunderbolt upon Saul. What he did or thought was under the most intense excitement and agitation of mind—under the influence of well-nigh paralyzing terror. Few men, however wicked, but would have made some such responses as he made,* and, like him, suffered themselves to be led, unmanned and helpless, whither the voice directed.

There was in all this ample opportunity for stamping on the perception certain indelible impressions which were destined to revolutionize the entire after life; but there was in this moment, filled with the utmost terror and excitement, *no opportunity for the action of the deliberative understanding.* The circumstances were calculated rather to overwhelm this, than to call it forth. There was, at most, only time for one quick undeliberated act or word. How worthless are those modern conversions made in haste, and under stress of strong and unpoising excitement, is well known; but they are deliberation itself as compared with that of Saul, if his took place in its entirety at this distracting moment. It was not Saul's deepest self which made answer then, with shattered nerves, and in a whirl of well-nigh bewildering excitement and confusion. But Christ wants no decision to give oneself to him in a lifelong service, in a moment of almost paralyzing terror, without opportunity for fully realizing the situation. He requires that those who come to him shall first "count the cost." In Lk. xiv. 26, *sq.*, he says: "If any man

* The last sentence in verse 5 (Acts ix.) and Saul's language in verse 6, as found in the Authorized Version, are not found in the best manuscripts, and are omitted from the Revised Version. Saul's language was simply, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts xxii. 10).

cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold him begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace. So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." This requirement, so positively enjoined by Christ, Saul has not yet complied with. Shall we suppose him to have committed the very folly which Christ here so strongly condemns? He did so, if, without time to consider, he made his final surrender to Christ at this exciting moment. There are many questions for Saul yet to ask and answer in his own heart. Until that moment he had regarded Jesus and his disciples with a contemptuous and deadly hatred. Can he now give his all to them? He is an educated young man of bright promise and, perhaps, already a member of the highest court of the nation, the Sanhedrim. Can he cast in his lot with an uncultured and despised band, whose leader has suffered the extreme penalty of the law as a malefactor? Then, there is trouble before this people;

and not unlikely, and as the event proved, he will be called to suffer martyrdom for this cause. Is he ready for this? Is he ready to suffer the loss of all things, and die a perpetual death of suffering for this despised cause? These and many other questions are yet to be asked and answered. If it be said that from what we know of the man there can be no doubt what the answers will be, this is admitted; but Christ demands that the questions shall first be asked and answered by the heart, before one can be his disciple. When the Philippian jailor fell prostrate before Paul and Silas, and asked them what he must do to be saved, there could be no doubt, from the conditions of the case, that he would both believe what they said and do what they commanded; but as yet he had done neither, and was not yet saved. So of Saul in this case: there is a task before him which he is sure to perform; but it is not yet performed, and he is not yet ready to make such a surrender of his life to Christ as Christ demands. Christ requires that, *in full view of all that is involved*, men shall commit themselves unreservedly to him. This may often be quickly done, but there is no case of conversion in the apostolic age in which there was not *time to consider*. Whether this be long or short, it should be long enough to enable the sinner to reach a deliberate decision in view of all that is involved. Such a decision requires a life-review; and with the man who already believes himself ready to follow unreservedly the leadings of duty, such a survey may reveal to him, as Christ's words did to the rich young man, that which will cause him to go away sorrowful. Repentance is often a series of many battles, the asking of the heart many questions. It is (while it is much

more) also a counting of the cost. It involves thinking, consideration. All this was impossible with Saul in that single moment of terror and excitement. He needs to be alone with his thoughts—to reconstruct his mental life—to *realize* the full import of this almost paralyzing disclosure. And precisely this Christ provides for him.

The divine will is manifested not less by what God *does* than by what he says. In answer to Saul's question Christ does not *tell* him to repent, but sends him to Damascus, and leaves him there with his thoughts for three days. We know of no reason why, from among the disciples at Damascus, one might not have been ready to meet Saul on his arrival, or soon after; but days seem to have elapsed before any steps were taken to send him an instructor. This fact should not be overlooked in any estimate which we may form of Saul's condition.* In Christ's view, he evidently

*Neander says: "It might be expected that Paul could not at once, after such an impression, enter upon a new course of action. Everything which had hitherto been the motive and aim of his conduct, now seemed as nothing. Sorrow must have been the predominant feeling of his crushed spirit. He could not instantaneously recover from so overwhelming an impression, which gave a new direction to his whole being. He was reduced to a state of mental and bodily weakness, from which he could not restore himself. He passed three days without food. This was for him the point of transition from death to a new life; and nothing can so vividly express his feelings at this awful crisis as the exclamation which he himself, reverting to his earlier state, puts in the lips of the man who, with the deepest consciousness of inward slavery under the violated law, and with earnest aspirations after freedom, pours forth his whole heart in the words, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?'" —*Planting and Training, Ryland's Edition*, p. 63. This is not the language of a saved man, nor of *faith*. It would be *despair*, but for an expected message yet to come.

Dr. Lechler in Lange's *Com.* speaks in a similar manner, declaring that, at the time of the vision on the Damascus road, Saul's "conversion originally began," and afterwards "advances and is completed."—*Com., in loco*. Dr. Gerok, author of the

was not *ready* to receive the message he had in store for him. He might indeed have been told to repent; but what need of such a command, when he was left alone for three days quivering under the terrible blow which had been struck. No command was needed for that which was bound to take place with awful certainty. But it was a part of the divine purpose in Saul's case, that he be left alone for a time, that what he had seen and heard might have opportunity to do its work.

But, before we follow him into his lonely and dark vigil, let us pause to note another fact relating to the scene on the Damascus road. On that occasion there was not one word said about his personal salvation. No doubt Saul's question had reference to that, but it was not answered. From the account in Acts xxvi. 16-18, it might at first seem that Christ had at that time given Saul his commission as an apostle, but the tenor of the other narratives (Acts ix. and xxii.) makes this extremely doubtful. Many of the ablest scholars think that Paul here, in his speech before Agrippa, combines what was spoken to him by Ananias in chapter xxii. 14, 15, with what had previously been spoken to him directly by Christ. This is the view of Meyer, of Dr. Lechler in Lange's *Commentary*, and of Alford, who says: "I do not see, with Stier, the necessity of maintaining that all these words were actually *spoken* to him *at some time* by the Lord. The message delivered by Ananias certainly

Homiletical Department of the same commentary, says: "God deemed it wise to wait, in the case of Paul, in order to deliver him effectually from his Pharisaical pride and his deep-rooted hatred of the cross of Christ."—*Com., in loco.* Pressensé says: "It would be a grave mistake to suppose that Saul's conversion was completed on the road to Damascus."—*Early Years of Christianity, Apostolic Era*, p. 109.

furnished some of them," etc.* Philip Schaff says: "In [Acts] xxvi. 16-18, Jesus himself reveals to Paul his call to be an apostle, whereas in both the other accounts this is done through Ananias. This is explained by considering that Paul before Agrippa condenses his story for the sake of brevity. And in fact the first representation is by no means untrue, since Ananias acted under commission from the Lord, and Paul, while yet on his way, was referred to this transaction (ix. 6)." † There are, however, some who think the words recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter were spoken at the time of Christ's personal appearance to Saul on the way to Damascus, while still others are in doubt whether they were uttered then or on a later occasion. In this latter class may be numbered Conybeare and Howson and Dr. Hackett. While regarding either interpretation as possible, Dr. Hackett says: "The message which Ananias delivered to Saul (intimated here in *v.* 15, [ch. ix.] but recorded more fully in xxii. 14-16) was a message from Christ; and as the apostle makes no mention of Ananias in xxvi. 16 *sq.*, it is very possible that he has there, for the sake of brevity, passed over the intermediate agency, and referred the words directly to Christ, which Christ communicated to him through Ananias. This would be merely applying the common maxim, *Quod quis per alium facit, id ipse fecisse putantur.*"‡ Farrar regards it as doubtful whether this communication was made to Saul at this time, or

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* Lange's *Com., in loco.*

† *History of Apostolic Church*, p. 232.

‡This freedom Christ himself makes use of when he declares God to have said (Mt. xix. 4, 5) what was spoken only by Adam (Gen. ii. 24) with the divine approval.

later, and perhaps partly through his own reflection.* Prof. Stevens regards Paul's call to the apostleship as having been conveyed through Ananias (Acts xxii. 15).† So, also, Prof. Briggs.‡ That this view, which represents the trend of modern scholarship, is the correct one, there can be little doubt.

In view of this, it is evident that we cannot count on Saul's having received any call to the apostleship while on his way to Damascus, which, had it taken place, would of course have *implied* that personal salvation awaited him, although neither the time nor the conditions were mentioned. All that we can depend upon is, that in response to Saul's question, "What shall I do?" he is bidden to go to Damascus, and there it shall be told him. What the nature of this communication will be, he has no means of knowing. There is nothing on which he can rely further than that he is to receive a message revealing to him some duty. True, the implication is that Christ will not cast him off, but even this is not *said*. Will he be admitted to all the exalted privileges and blessings of the Christian estate? He does not know. His knowledge of Christianity is very imperfect, and doubtless his impressions regarding it are in many respects incorrect. What will be done with such a case as his? All this is matter of conjecture and uncertainty. Then there is playing over this uncertainty a powerful influence making for the darker view. The portentous clouds of a condemning conscience darken his sky. To all the more hopeful interpretations of the situation, the enormity of his sin rises up and

* Farrar's *Life and Work of St. Paul*, p. 112.

† *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 330. Compare also his *Pauline Theology*, p. 22.

‡ *The Messiahship of the Gospels*, p. 123.

says, *No, impossible!* Fear and remorse often work sad havoc with probabilities. Some years ago, a prominent business man was sentenced for a term of ten years to Auburn prison for embezzlement. The indictment contained three counts, and the sentence embraced them all. On the way to prison the condemned man asked the sheriff how long his term was to be. "Ten years," replied the sheriff. "No," said the mental sufferer, "I guess not; there were three indictments and it must be thirty years." No one else of the millions who read the account of that trial made such a mistake. Yet this man possessed a clear and shrewd mind—was president of a great banking establishment. It was the mistake of despair. How often in the history of modern evangelism has the awakened sinner, under the pangs of a condemning conscience, been led to painful misgivings regarding the possibility of his salvation! No darker cloud ever lifted itself against hope than the blood-black vision of Saul's sin. What is in store for him? He does not know; and on this blank canvas conscience is painting a thousand disquieting visions. The situation is one, not for an assured and serene *trust*, but for painful *suspense*. Christ has said enough to shut off despair, but not enough to make possible Christian trust. For Saul to receive Christ as his own personal Savior, resting in him as saved, and entering into blessed union with him at this time, were an impossibility. No man can accept, even mentally, what has not been offered, and Saul has received no proffer of salvation. Whatever may have been Saul's state of mind, it is certain that the appropriating, union-forming faith that is reckoned for righteousness was not possible to him at this time, and must remain im-

possible until the message comes offering him salvation and specifying the conditions on which it is to be received. That salvation is not offered till he is bidden to receive it in baptism. It was a psychological impossibility that he should appropriate it, even mentally, before that time. The conditions of the situation shut off this spiritual act before Saul's baptism, and place it in that act, and *nowhere else*. It was as impossible for Saul to exercise a personal, possessive trust at the time of his meeting with Christ in the way to Damascus, or during the subsequent three days of mourning, as it would have been for him to transform himself into an angel. The great appropriative spiritual act—justifying faith—took place in Saul's case in his baptism, and there, with perfect fitness, the remission of his sins is placed.

This, I think there can be little doubt, was the true state of the case; but as there have been some able expositors who inclined to the view that Paul's call to the apostleship took place at the time of Christ's meeting with him on the road to Damascus, it may be well to inquire what bearing that view would have on the question we are considering. Men are not wont to appoint, or even to decide on the appointment of, any one to a position, until they are satisfied of his fitness for it, and the decision to appoint, no less than the appointment itself, argues their belief in that fitness. To a certain extent this must have been true of Christ in his proposed appointment of Saul to the apostleship.

He beheld in him certain traits, mental and moral, which would fit him eminently for such a service; but does this extend so far as to imply Saul's conversion, and his acceptance into the divine fellow-

ship as accomplished facts at that time? Certainly no one is fitted for the apostleship who is not converted, and if converted, then surely, pardoned and admitted into the fellowship of the redeemed. Would Saul's call to the apostleship, then, at this time imply all this? If so, it would seem also to imply much more; for Christ determined to appoint him to the apostleship, and appeared unto him for that purpose, while Saul was the deadly enemy of his cause and in the midst of his fiery career as a persecutor of his people. Certainly Saul was not then fitted for the apostleship in the sense of being either converted or pardoned. Christ's whole action in this matter was prospective and founded on the divine prescience. He determined to appoint Saul as his apostle, and *went about doing* so while Saul was yet wholly unfitted for the office, simply in view of his foreseen fitness at some future time. And this is all that Christ's action implies. His determination to appoint Saul to the apostleship was not an afterthought arising from some perceived present fitness, after the miracle had taken place, but a purpose which had existed, and whose execution was undertaken, while Saul was still a persecutor.

If the call to the apostleship necessarily carried within itself the assurance that Saul was already pardoned and saved, it would be but natural that, either then or as soon as his mind was prepared to take the step, he should reach forth in heart to grasp and joyfully appropriate the proffered blessing. Thus the appropriative spiritual act—appropriative faith—would take place before his baptism. But, as we have seen, Christ's language to Saul carries no such

implication. His purpose and his action were founded on foresight, not on fact.

It must not be forgotten also, that if Saul was pardoned and admitted to the divine fellowship at that time, it involved a breach of the divine law of acceptance under both dispensations. Christ taught that even a trivial wrong to our fellows will bar the way to all acceptable service of God, until the wrong has been made right; and here a case of most aggravated wrong against Christ's own people would have to be completely ignored, while the criminal and murderer is received into the fullest divine fellowship. If this constitutional law of Christ's kingdom is to be violated here, it is difficult, as before said, to see how it can be made to apply to any case whatever. We are reduced to the absurd conclusion that, while trivial wrongs bar the door to the divine fellowship, great wrongs and heinous crimes, unadjusted, form no such bar.

Saul very well understood, as did all the Jewish people, that wrongs committed against others must be adjusted before an offering to God could be accepted, or the divine pardon granted. This was clearly enjoined in the Jewish law, and so far as Saul had become acquainted with the Christians, he must have observed the same principle obtaining in Christ's kingdom, for Christ had reaffirmed the law with even extended application. Saul had been guilty of most heinous wrongs against many of Christ's own people, and his knowledge of the divine dealings would forbid any expectation of pardon at this time. Even his question, "What shall I do?" assumes that something remains for him to *do*. He expects no pardon now, and he will be as far as pos-

sible from putting that construction on the language of Christ which commends itself to some who, in large part, overlook the principle of the divine government which was so familiar to him.

If we are to suppose that the language recorded in Acts xxvi. 16-18 was spoken to Saul directly by Christ at the time of his appearance to him in the way to Damascus, we are, of course, entitled to draw all legitimate conclusions from it; but none of these inferences must cancel any part of the other two narratives found in Acts ix. and xxii. These must be allowed their full force. How do the statements of these accounts affect the situation?

When Saul learned that his heavenly visitant was none other than the Jesus whom he was persecuting, he cried out, "What shall I do?" (Acts xxii. 10). This question had reference to one thing only—his great sin. It was the awful situation in which he found himself that prompted the question, and it had no other reference. This question was answered directly by Jesus by instructing him to go to Damascus for information. Saul, then, understands that there is something for him to do which Christ does not disclose to him at this interview, and that that something has relation to his great sin. This matter, then, he realizes, is not disposed of. Christ says to him nothing about remission of sins or salvation, and as Saul's question had had reference to that, what Christ has to say to him on this subject he will understand to be reserved for the future communication. This will accord perfectly with his own knowledge of the method of the divine dealing, and he will expect no pardon till he receives the promised message and complies with its conditions. The spiritual step of

appropriating Christ's salvation and entering into union with him would therefore not be possible at this time, even though he were prepared in mind to take it.*

What follows during the next three days is in perfect accord with this view of the case. Saul takes neither food nor drink during this time. It is generally conceded that his fast was a result of his mental suffering in view of his sin. True, his blindness would be a source of sorrow, but to suppose the fast to be due to that cause would be to misjudge entirely his moral nature, and place that foremost which was secondary with him. The subsequent vision which assured him of the healing of his blindnes, moreover, does not terminate his fast, but the communication regarding the remission of his sins (Acts xxii. 16), and his compliance therewith, immediately brings

*Both Pressensé and Albert Barnes take the view that Saul received his call to the apostleship directly from the lips of Jesus while on the way to Damascus, but they do not therefore draw the conclusion that Saul's conversion was completed at that time, nor that his sins had been remitted. Pressense says: "It would be a great mistake to suppose that Saul's conversion was completed on the road to Damascus. His pride was broken; his doubts were scattered; but he did not at once rise from that tremendous blow which had severed his life in two. He then, indeed, received his calling as an apostle (Acts xxvi. 16-18), but he had not then any conception of its greatness or of its cost." He further says that during the three days of fasting and sorrow, "he [Saul] experienced all the depths of a true repentance." — *Early Years of Christianity, Apostolic Era*, p. 109. What Pressensé regards as lacking, at that time, to the completion of Saul's conversion, was nothing less than his repentance.

In assigning the reason for Saul's fasting, Albert Barnes says: "We must remember also that Paul had yet no assurance of forgiveness. He was arrested, alarmed, convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and humbled, but he had no comfort. He was brought to the dust, and left to three painful days of darkness and suspense, before it was told him what he was to do. In this painful and perplexing state, it was natural that he should abstain from food."—Barnes' *Notes*, Acts ix. 9.

relief of mind and a breaking of his fast (ix. 19). The turning point from Saul's overwhelming sorrow and suspense to relief and peace of mind was his baptism. But certainly neither water nor any merely ceremonial act had power to work such a change. The explanation is to be found in the fact that Saul did in his baptism what, from the circumstances of the case, had been impossible to him before—joyfully appropriated Christ's salvation and entered into blessed fellowship with him. Why the conditions making this appropriative, possessive faith possible were withheld until this time, we must suppose to be due to the fact that he was not earlier prepared for it.

Returning from this digression, let us proceed in our examination of Saul's spiritual history. He proceeds to Damascus, enters the house of one Judas, and is alone with his sin. The light of day is shut out, and he gazes upon but one vision—his sin. He has been fighting against God and persecuting the church of his anointed. In the silence he hears the groans of the dying, and beholds again in awful vividness the scenes of his former persecutions. As he realizes some new aspect of his crime, his sin rolls in upon him like a mountain wave; he shudders and is borne to the earth. All thoughts of personal safety flee, and he faces in anguish but one awful fact—his sin. Willingly would he bare his breast to the divine thunderbolt, and a sentence of doom would be almost a relief. How often have criminals yielded up their safe-kept secret that they might suffer the penalty of their crime, finding even in this some relief for a wrong they could never undo. The agitation and terror of the recent vision are now gone, and Saul is alone with—*sin*. It is a storm of conscience. It is

deep, dark, awful repentance. His heart is breaking. It ought to break; he will rise out of these billows never to hate again. Down, down, down he sinks, till he feels that he is the very chief of sinners: he never will know spiritual pride again. He will ever feel a brotherhood of guilt with the lowest and vilest of men. Humility is being born.

More than this, there rolls in upon him one dark, awful fact—he cannot undo his wrong. He cannot recall the dead of whose blood he has been guilty; he cannot loose the bonds of those in prison, and who may have been consigned to death by his vote. The arrow flown is past recall. As by a monster with its fiery breath upon his cheek does he seem pinioned to the earth by his sin; or as chained to a decayed and festering body, he cannot escape, or free himself from its loathsome presence. It is to him an awful fact—one from which, neither within his own resources, nor in his religion, has he found any release. Hour after hour his thoughts bring in new freightage of agony, until he cries, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" and groans toward heaven: "O God, if there be even in Omnipotence any power to cleanse me, save me! wash me! and let me stand white in thy presence!" His prayer is answered. A man is seen in a vision coming in and laying hands on him that he may receive his sight, and soon Ananias is at his side. He says, having laid hands on him and restored his sight: "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest

thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name'' (Acts xxii. 14-16). This is the first word yet spoken regarding his salvation; and it is from Christ, as he knows, for Ananias stands accredited to him by the healing of his blindness. He is to arise and be baptized, and Christ will meet him there and cleanse him from his sin. He may not understand why it is so, but he cannot doubt it. He obeys; and as he sinks into his Redeemer's grave, trusting in his promise, he lays the burden on Christ. He appropriates to his soul that priceless salvation. In an act of appropriative faith, trusting in his Savior's promise, he receives from his hand the offered boon and *rests* in his Redeemer. With Saul, not till now have the conditions existed making such a mental act possible. Now the appropriative faith and the peace are his—a chastened joy of release—a rest of soul, but one which hears, and will never cease to hear, the thunders of the receding storm. The sufferer whose form is racked with the tortures of disease, whose features bespeak the agonies of approaching dissolution, at last grows calm; all is still, and a smile of peace rests on the thin, pale face. It is death—death to pain, to suffering, to sorrow. The old foes still exist, but the sufferer has escaped them; he is *dead*. Saul also is *dead!* Sin storms just behind, but he has escaped. The soul so lately rent with agony is now at rest. He has laid all on Christ. He has found shelter in the bosom of his Redeemer. He has escaped as from the fangs of a monster. He is DEAD—*dead to sin*. The struggle is over, and there is rest. The burden has been lifted from his soul. When this man writes about justification by faith, where will he place the justification?

where will he place the faith that appropriates it? and where will he place death to sin? The conditions of the narrative place both the justification and the faith that appropriates it (the appropriating spiritual act), *in baptism*. Not one word is said about Saul's personal salvation earlier than Acts xxii. 16, and the conditions for the existence of this faith did not exist till that time. Saul believed on (εἰς, into) the Lord Jesus Christ in its blessed and completed sense, *in his baptism*, there died to sin (fled from it, and grasping the strong hand was freed from its guilt and hopeless thralldom), and there was justified (Rom. vi. 7).

Before leaving this stage of our inquiry, however, one question demands attention. Before his baptism, and before he was visited by Ananias, we are told that Saul prayed; and the question may arise whether this does not indicate the completion of the spiritual process of his conversion. This fact in his spiritual history is not to be passed without due consideration. What his prayer contained we are not informed, but the fact itself is not without significance. It forms a way-mark in the progress of his conversion, and throws light on his mental condition at that point. It certainly implies submission. It means that the last struggle in the fierce battle of repentance is over. It means that Saul is ready to do God's whole will regarding Christ, just as Cornelius and his friends were ready to hear and do when Peter visited them (Acts x. 33). That Saul has not been ready before, in some sense, is implied in the fact that Christ's message to him regarding his duty is still withheld. His prayer is accepted provisionally, like that of Cornelius, and like his, also, results in a vision and the sending of an instructor. But Cor-

nelius' prayer, although accepted in this sense, did not imply his salvation (Acts xi. 14) nor the remission of his sins (ch. x. 43). Saul's praying implies submission and readiness to do, for the divine steps are immediately taken to inform him of his duty and admit him to the kingdom of Christ (ch. ix. 10-18); but it does *not* imply that the spiritual process of his conversion is completed. He has not "put on Christ" (taken him to himself), nor entered into spiritual union with him; for Christ has not yet offered himself in such a relation. He has not laid hold on Christ and rested in him as saved (personal, appropriative faith); for he neither knows on what conditions he may do so, nor has this blessed privilege yet been offered to him. He is in the condition of many who enter the inquiry room in modern revivals. He is submissive and ready to do his duty, but he does not know what it is, and that appropriative trust that shall bring him into blessed union with Christ is not yet possible. He is an inquirer. He has asked the question what he shall do regarding his sin, and it has not yet been answered. He knows there is *something* to be done, for Christ has said so (ch. ix. 6). Though he is now ready in heart, Christ does not yet make the proffer that makes appropriative faith possible, does not grant him the Holy Spirit, and cannot grant him the remission of sins, without violating moral law, as well as a principle of his government. Saul is red-handed with a crime; and, although its perpetuation could be easily and quickly stopped, nothing has been done to stop it. Hence Christ does not meet him here; Saul does not lay hold on Christ in personal, possessive faith; the Holy Spirit, with its assurance of sonship, is not yet

given; and Saul's fast, the symbol of his mourning and gloom, is not broken. Saul's conversion is not yet completed; its spiritual steps have not all been taken. The assurance of the vision that he shall receive his sight does not break his fast; his blindness is not the cause of his great sorrow. The agonizing question regarding his sin has not yet been answered. He knows that that matter is not yet disposed of, for it has yet to be dealt with (ch. ix. 6). He is still held at arm's length. Crushed in spirit, shattered in body, and overwhelmed by a great sorrow, he awaits the message that is to tell him what is to be done about his sin.

It is worthy of remark that, had Saul at the time of uttering his prayer known what his duty was and the divine will regarding him, there would have been at that point, not simply a virtual or actual surrender, but also a glad laying hold on the offered salvation, and the anxious and agonizing prayer would have been changed into the "calling on the name of the Lord," of baptism. As, in other cases, the answer to the question what to do was not delayed, the acts of surrender and appropriative trust were wont to take place together, being merged into one act, and not separated as in the case of Saul. If in any case, however, obligation is learned before privilege, the steps of surrender and appropriative trust will be likely to take place separately, as they did with Saul.

Since, in Saul's experience, the act of appropriative trust took place in his baptism, it is easy to see why, in arguing from the case of Abraham, baptism should not be excluded from the faith that is reckoned for righteousness, and why Paul should place the spiritual act of putting on Christ (Gal. iii. 27)

and entering into union with him (Rom. vi. 5), in baptism. So it had been in his own conversion.

We have, however, not yet exhausted the elements of Saul's experience. There was more than the rest of soul naturally resulting from casting all in trust upon Christ, however great the sense of relief from such an act. There rose in his heart a strong sense of assurance that he was accepted, and that, not simply as a pardoned culprit, but as a son—that he was loved and admitted into the fellowship of Heaven. So strong was this assurance that he found his lips moving with the blessed words, "Abba, Father." Now, at what time did this blessed assurance come to him? Was it either on the Damascus road or during his three days of mourning and suspense? We cannot be in doubt regarding this, for he himself distinctly refers such assurance to the reception of the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 15 and Gal. iv. 6), and this did not come at the time of his meeting with Christ on his way to Damascus, nor during his three days of mourning, but *at his baptism.**

*On the time of Saul's reception of the Holy Spirit, see Appendix B., 449. We may further say that, even if it were to be allowed that the bestowment of the Holy Spirit took place in Saul's case *before* his baptism, it would not essentially change the bearings of this question. Even in that case, the Holy Spirit and its assurance of acceptance did not come either while on the road to Damascus or during Saul's agonizing days of repentance, but on the occasion of, and in immediate connection with, his baptism; and it must in his memory have been referred to that occasion, and not to either of the other stages of his experience. He was baptized immediately after receiving his sight (Acts xxii. 16). Paul unquestionably refers this sense to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and as he places the reception of the Spirit after (or *in*) baptism (Tit. iii. 5; Gal. iii. 26, 27 compared with iv. 6; Acts xix. 1-7) in his teaching and practice, this would bring the assurance of sonship in or after baptism in the case of *other* converts, even though it had not been so in his case. But, as shown in the appendix, there is no sufficient evidence that his case was exceptional.

We have not even yet exhausted all the elements of Saul's experience. He was destined soon to make a discovery. In all his previous strivings against sin, he had found it impossible to master it. The very effort to put it down and banish it from his heart—to purify the fountains of his thought and feeling—had quickened it into new vitality, and he had found himself a helpless victim to its power. He now finds all this changed. Explain it as we may, Paul found this to be one of the great facts of Christianity. Was it due to the drawing of the soul out of itself by the kindling of a new and passionate attachment to a pure and holy Being? Perhaps so, at least in part. Perhaps also it was due to more than we can explain on any natural principles. We are not, however, so much concerned with its philosophical explanation, as with Paul's own understanding of it. The source to which he referred this new power is very clearly stated. In Rom. viii: 1-3, he says:

"There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.* For the

* In vv. 5, 6, 9, 13, the R. V. does not capitalize the word *spirit* in the text; but the American committee of revisers record their dissent from this. We follow the American committee's rendering.

mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace; because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God. BUT YE ARE NOT IN THE FLESH, BUT IN THE SPIRIT, IF SO BE THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Here a disability to fulfil the law of righteousness is asserted, and ascribed to the "flesh"; while the overcoming of this disability, so that "the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled," is ascribed to the indwelling of the Spirit, without which one cannot belong to Christ or be owned by him. With all Paul's earnest efforts before, he had met with nothing but failure (Rom. vii. 15-25); now he finds himself energized by a new power to master sin, which he declares to be due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And this came in Saul's case, not while on the Damascus road, nor during the three days of mourning, but *at his baptism*. And here we have the other element which Paul places in the comprehensive phrase *death to sin*,—not only a renunciation of it, a cutting loose from it, and a freeing from its guilt, but also a freeing from its *power*. If this occurred at Saul's baptism, and if baptism is, by divine appointment, a condition of the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts ii. 38), this escape from the power of sin,—from its "bondage" (Rom. vi. 6),—this completion of the act of *death to sin*, is to be associated with baptism, and not with any previous stage of experience.

Even if we should attempt to explain this new power as a result proceeding from an overmastering affection for a holy Being, where should we locate it?

—when Saul was smitten and crushed to the earth by the awful fact of his crime against Christ and his church? while he lay agonizing over his sin, and awaiting some word that should bring him light? Is it here, where he is crushed by the sense of his guilt, and writhing beneath it like a helpless victim in the grasp of a monster—is it here that he feels the sense of victory? Would it not rather be when he had entered into blessed union and communion with Christ, and felt that the barrier of his crime, built mountain high against heaven, had been removed by absolution? —something that he could not feel while he still remained in the dark concerning the divine will respecting his salvation. But, even if we refer this new power to love, drowning all lower and incompatible feelings in the flood of a new life of affection, we must remember that Paul refers this new and submerging love itself to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, for he says (Gal. v. 22): "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." The uprising of all these heart-forces for righteousness is referred to the indwelling Spirit. So that, even though this explanation be given of Paul's new experience of power over sin, it would still be referred by him, in most important emphasis, to the gift of the Holy Spirit. Let it be remembered, whatever be the explanation given of it, that Paul distinctly refers this new power over sin to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—an event which took place at his baptism, not at any earlier period of his experience.

But there remains still another aspect of Saul's experience to be considered, namely, his sense of union with Christ. In Rom. vi. he speaks of being united

with Christ by the likeness of his death, of being baptized *into* him, and, in other places, of being *in* Christ, and of Christ's dwelling *in* us. To what point must we refer the origin of this sense? Paul's *language* places it in baptism, but it is thought by many that it cannot properly be placed there.

This doctrine of union with Christ may possibly be referred to several sources. It may be supposed to have been communicated to Paul by direct revelation, and held to be true on the strength of the divine veracity, without any other evidence of its existence. It is, however, true that it was the possession of the church long before Paul's conversion. Christ had taught it in the clearest manner during his earthly ministry, declaring that a vital union like that of the branch with the vine existed between him and his people. The gift of the Holy Spirit had, centuries before, been a matter of prophecy by Joel and had been dwelt upon by John the Baptist as the distinguishing characteristic of the Messiah's approaching reign; while in the representative sermon preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost, this divine indwelling had been promised to all peoples on condition of repentance and baptism. Unless, therefore, this blessed fact and glorious promise were illusive, the fact of mystic union with Christ was a matter of common experience with Christians in Paul's time, so that no divine revelation would be necessary to communicate the knowledge of its existence to Paul. While this truth might therefore be supposed to come into Paul's possession as a common heritage of the church, and be held by him as a mere abstract doctrine of theology, believed on the strength of the divine veracity, I believe that this will not

fully account for Paul's teaching on the subject. His representation of it is too original, and too personal, to have proceeded from any source less profound than that of personal realization of its blessed experience in his daily life. Such language as, "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me," and much other of like character, is too fervid and personal to be a mere matter of cold theology. Paul's original and vivid setting forth of this great truth can only have sprung from direct and practical experience. His language is redolent of the heart.

What, then, let us ask, was the origin of Paul's sense of union with Christ, and to what point in his experience is it to be referred? Shall we suppose it to be the result of his consciousness of love for Christ? The language of love is the language of union the world over; and love produces a sense of oneness between persons, so that they suffer in sympathy, enjoy together, and are twinned in interest. The union of friendship and of marriage are unions of love. We can hardly doubt that much of what Paul describes as union with Christ finds its explanation in this dominant principle of the Christian life. If, then, Saul loved Christ before his baptism, and if love always produces a sense of union with the object loved, must not the sense of union with Christ have arisen before Saul's baptism? If these things be true, such would evidently be the conclusion. But *does* love always, and under all circumstances, give rise to a sense of union? So far is it from doing so, that a great wrong done may produce a painful sense of distance and separation. The erring one may feel himself shut out and removed from the fellowship which is natural to

love, and craved by it; and he will feel this sense of severance till he has done something to heal the wound he has inflicted, and is forgiven—that is, until the barrier is removed. Then, and not till then, will the sense of union be restored. Such was Saul's case. He had been guilty of a monstrous wrong against Christ and his people. Christ had charged it upon him. He had said nothing about pardoning it. He had given no information as to what was to be done about it. Christ had sent him away to think, and told him he would tell him what to do later. It was clear to Saul that the matter was not yet disposed of. There was reason to believe that when Christ should submit his conditions, if he accepted and complied with them, he might be pardoned and accepted, but not till then; and how much of even this the crushing sense of his mountain sin permitted him to hope for, we cannot know. During this period of waiting and suspense, a dark and impassable gulf must have seemed to lie between him and Christ. Under these circumstances any sense of union was impossible. Love itself would render it doubly so. At last Ananias is sent to him and tells him that Christ will meet him in absolution in baptism. Saul complies, and *there* the barrier to union is removed. Then it was that love's sweet sense of oneness began to be felt; and need we any longer wonder that it is just there that Paul in Rom. vi. 5, places union with Christ?

But, while love to Christ was doubtless an indispensable element in Paul's sense of mystic union with Christ, it can hardly be regarded as exhausting the idea. Love can hardly, of itself, complete the sense of union if there be no reciprocating communion. A statesman and his estimable wife not long ago lavished

millions on a great university of the West in memory of an idolized and only son. It was all they could do to heal the wound that death had made in their hearts. It was a precious ministry, a chaplet laid on the brow of the vanished form of their boy; but this ministry of love could not undo a sense of separation from the departed one. It was love striving to span the gulf of death and loss, but not satisfying itself. So Paul's passionate love for Christ can, of itself, hardly fill out the meaning of his language of union. There must be a consciousness of double life—another presence within the soul, quickening it and ever responding in answering blessedness to every thought and act of communing love and trust. How this may be, we need not ask. There need be no spirit-vision of another personality, but a new sense of strength and spiritual quickening, and an answering blessing to every advance of the heart, assuring it that the unseen Christ is there. Such a sense of union can only be referred to the indwelling Spirit; and this came to Saul, as we know, in connection with his baptism, not at any earlier stage of his conversion, and was, by divine appointment, to be received on condition of repentance and baptism by all whom God should call to his salvation (Acts 2:38,39).*

Thus we have one long-standing question answered.

* It should be observed that the presence and communion of the indwelling Spirit is not necessarily all there is in union with Christ. There is, as we have seen, the power of love going far to form that bond; and then the surrender to and acceptance of Christ in that holy relation, and the pardon of sin and adoption to divine sonship, constitute in themselves the formation of a union with Christ, but one lacking in completeness. Marriage might take place at a distance, by telegraph, and would even then be a union; but if separation were contemplated as perpetual, it would lose most of its meaning. The union with Christ is not satisfied and completed apart from the indwelling of the Spirit.

All the spiritual elements which Paul attributes to baptism in Rom. vi. 1-7 and Gal. iii. 27, were actually connected with it in his own conversion. They are not therefore to be referred to some earlier stage of conversion, and regarded as simply symbolically looked back upon by a memorial rite; but they all belong to baptism, and were all actually connected with that most joyous and glorious of baptisms, the baptism of Paul. In the first seven verses of the sixth chapter of Romans Paul is writing blessed history. It is the transcript of one shining hour, the hour of his baptism. In this spiritually profound and most momentous of baptisms we have the key to the New Testament doctrine. Rom. vi. tells us what baptism *is* to a soul shaken and crushed with the sense of sin, and then told that Christ will meet it in pardoning mercy in that holy act. Rom. vi. is heart-history. What was it to this man to sink into the blessed arms and rise leaving his burden in the grave where he met his Redeemer? What was it to be "*filled*" (for to a heart so hungry and so ready, the Spirit came in no small measure) with the Holy Spirit, and feel the pulsations of a new life, the gladness of a new joy?

In the account of Paul's conversion no man can place that spiritual act which appropriated Christ's salvation (appropriative faith, the resting in him as saved), either at his meeting with Christ on the Damascus road, or during the subsequent three days of mourning, without doing violence to the narrative. The narrative asserts nothing of the kind, nor are the conditions which it presents compatible with such a view. No man can place Saul's pardon at either of these points without causing Christ to violate a fundamental principle of his government. Saul had a crime

against the Church of Christ first to be disposed of. No man can place the death to sin spoken of by Paul, at either of these points, unless death to sin be taken to mean repentance. But who, after reading Paul's language in Rom. vi. 6, which says: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin," and comparing this with the cry of despair of one who had already come to hate sin,—was trying to forsake it, i. e., a penitent,—but who found the loathsome corpse still clinging to him like an inseparable self—who that looks upon this picture can say that with Paul death to sin is accomplished in repentance? With Paul the man who is dead to sin has not only renounced it, but is justified from its guilt (Rom. vi:7) and released from its power (*v.* 6).* And this release from the power of sin is, with Paul, pre-eminently through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 1,2 *sq.* and *v.* 9, compare Eph. iii.16-19), a bestowment which takes place at and on condition of baptism. Then again, no one can place the sense of union with Christ, whether that sense arise from love to Christ, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, at any other stage of Saul's conversion than his baptism, without disregarding the conditions of the narrative.

It is rightly held by scholars, that Paul's theology has its foundation largely in his personal experience. Out of this grew his views of law and grace, of faith and of justification, and, may we not add, his doctrine of baptism, or, at least, his statement of that doctrine; for respecting the facts, he is in perfect

* Potentially, that is: he *can* overcome it with growing success, if he will; without Christ, he *cannot* do it.

accord with other teachers of the apostolic church. Paul's conversion is the matrix from which sprang his theology, and in that conversion stands out in boldest characters the spiritual nature of baptism: not only that baptism does possess spiritual elements, but precisely what they are; that it embraces the appropriating faith of salvation, the death to sin, and the spiritual union with Christ, accentuated—either *in* baptism, or closely connected therewith—by the bestowment of the Holy Spirit. It is the putting on of Christ (taking him as one's own), the appropriation of his salvation and of himself in a relation of blessed union and communion.

The spiritual and physical elements of baptism are joined together in the language of Paul; they were also joined in his own conversion, and in those of the converts of his time, and they will always be so joined in the experience of conversion, when the gospel is presented as it came from the lips of the apostles.

While the language of the apostle Paul connects all these spiritual things with baptism, and while the accounts of his conversion show that they were really so connected in his own case, it remains to ask one further question: Do the experiences of modern conversion warrant us in believing that such spiritual blessings are now connected with the act? Does baptism now embrace such spiritual experiences as are described in the sixth chapter of Romans? or, rather, do the facts of modern experience require that these shall be recognized as taking place at an earlier stage of the process of conversion? and are we not thus compelled to disconnect these spiritual events from the act of baptism? I answer that, if baptism is to

be displaced, being located somewhere on in the Christian life, and if the spiritual act of surrender to Christ, of appropriation of his salvation, and receiving him in a relation of vital union and communion, is made to take place apart from and long before baptism, baptism being transformed into a mere retrospective act—we must give up all reasonable hope of finding *anything* in it. If you deprive it of its *human* spiritual element, you should not be surprised if its *divine* spiritual element be also lacking. Separate its spirit and you leave it but a corpse, an external form. However great a man may be in physical or intellectual strength, we certainly expect nothing from his corpse. But if the faith that is reckoned for righteousness shall take place in baptism, if the soul shall there make its complete surrender to Christ and lay hold on him as its Savior, *all these spiritual blessings—these divine responses to faith—will take place in connection with baptism, or nowhere*. Raise baptism from the tomb of formalism in which it has long lain; let it be the giving of the soul to Christ, the cry for the divine forgiveness, the appropriation of the divine blessing, the prayerful, loving commitment of the life to its Redeemer, and the divine glories will again gather about it. Let it again be the return of the prodigal with anxious, heart-broken surrender, and the Father will be there to meet him with the kiss of absolution, with the ring of sonship, and shoes for the bleeding feet. Why should the Shekinah dwell in a temple forsaken of the human heart?

How often has the writer, in administering baptism, beheld a light not of earth in the face of the candidate, a rapt joy of heavenly peace and communion,

until he has been made to feel that he stood on holy ground. To the mortal eye there was no opening heavens, and no descending dove, no pealing thunder declaring, "This is my son!" but the joy was there, the peace, and the blessed sense of sonship. Restore Christian baptism; let it be what it was to Saul—out of his suspense, his agony, his crushing sense of guilt, a fleeing to Christ, a falling of the broken-hearted penitent into the arms of a forgiving Savior, and it will be, as it once was, the hallowed meeting place of the soul with its God.

CHAPTER VI.

METHODS OF RECONCILING PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION WITH THE STATEMENT OF PETER IN ACTS II. 38.

It has been the aim of the preceding pages to point out the true relation subsisting between faith and baptism, and to show that it involves no strained efforts of adjustment between those passages which grant salvation directly to faith, and that other class which make baptism a condition of attaining it. It now remains to consider some of the more common methods of reconciling these two classes of statements.

Paul, in his argument on justification, in the third and fourth chapters of Romans, makes justification depend on faith; while Peter, in his answer to inquirers on the day of Pentecost, makes remission of sins depend on repentance and baptism. Paul conducts his argument to its conclusion at the end of the fourth chapter, without mentioning any condition but faith. That he regards this as *the* condition of justification, is evident also from his reference to the case of Abraham, whose faith was counted for righteousness immediately, without waiting for any subsequent step. Moreover, when in the sixth chapter Paul does name something else, he does not speak of it as an additional condition, but as something involved in what he had already said. Whatever he may mean by it, it is evident that Paul's condition of justification is *faith*. In Peter's statement, on the other hand, the word *faith* does not occur. He an-

swers the questioning Pentecostians by saying: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The narrative makes it evident, however, that a change of view had already taken place in the minds of Peter's auditors. Peter had concluded his argument with the words: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." The Pentecostians had believed this, and had been seized with alarm and compunction in view of what they had done. On this account, Peter's answer to them embraces only what remained to be done.

The conditions of remission of sins are therefore, in their entirety, (1) belief in the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus, (2) repentance, and (3) baptism. This statement is certainly very different in form from that given by Paul in Rom. iii. and iv. How are they to be reconciled?

Before proceeding to answer this question, it is important to observe that it is not simply a question of reconciliation between Paul's and Peter's teaching, but equally one of reconciling Peter with himself, and Paul with himself. When Peter is preaching the gospel at the house of Cornelius, he declares that "every one that believeth on him [Jesus] shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Here justification, or remission of sins, is promised simply on condition of *faith*, and the statement is as strong as any which ever proceeded from Paul. On the other hand, Paul, in Titus iii. 5, declares that men are saved through "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit"; and when he is recount-

ing the incidents of his own conversion, on the steps of the castle at Jerusalem, he refers to Ananias as saying to him: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name" (Acts xxii. 16). While this language is not Paul's, Paul is our only witness that it was uttered, and had there been any disagreement between Paul and the other apostles on this subject, or had he deemed the language unwise or misleading, he would not have been at the trouble of giving it currency, and sanctioning it by repetition. It must be taken as having all the force of an utterance from him, and it places justification, or remission of sins, in baptism no less unequivocally than Peter's language in Acts ii. 38. The question is therefore not one of reconciling the teachings of the two apostles, but of reconciling the different ways of expressing the same thing made use of by them both. It is true, however, that one form of statement is more common with Paul, while the other is more usual with Peter.

How, now, shall these two forms of statement be reconciled? There are two methods which demand special attention from the fact that they have been extensively used.

§ *1. The First Method.*

One of the methods of reconciling these two forms of statement, consists in taking a stand squarely on the Petrine statement in Acts ii. 38, and seeking to bring the Pauline statement in Romans into accord with this. It is held that the conditions of justification, or remission of sins, are (1) faith (belief), (2) repentance, and (3) baptism. This claim is open to no objection. The ground is unassailable,

and those who fulfil these requirements in sincerity of heart have complied with all the conditions of justification.

This statement, too, is from the lips of a common man of the people, it is in the words of common use, and it is, moreover, presented in detail. It is free from obscurity, and is adapted to reach the apprehension of all quite as readily as any utterance in the New Testament. It may be abused in the direction of legalism, as that statement which is more particularly Pauline may be abused in the direction of intellectualism, and that of John, in the direction of mysticism. None of the apostles, however, were guilty of any of these abuses, and the church which drinks deeply at the fountains of all three, will be preserved from them all.

While, therefore, those who plant themselves squarely on the simple and unequivocal statement of Peter, are sure to be right in the ground which they occupy, the question of how this position is to be reconciled with the statements of Paul in Romans iii. and iv. is quite another matter. If we take the *belief* which constitutes the first step in this trio of conditions, and attempt to read it into Paul's language in his argument on justification, we at once encounter difficulties:

1. Abraham's faith, which Paul refers to as a type of justifying faith, sprang out of a loyal heart; this belief of the Pentecostians which preceded their repentance, did not. It is repentance which makes the heart loyal, and these Pentecostians had yet to repent. These men had not been loyal to Christ, but had just been accused of being guilty of his death. 2. Abraham's faith needed not to be followed by repentance; this belief of the truth did. 3. Abraham's

faith was *trust*—trust in God for a great blessing; this initial belief in the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus was not trust. There could be no trust in Christ until his will regarding salvation was known, and the proffer accepted. The resolution to accept the conditions of salvation normally takes place in repentance. These people had not repented, therefore had not reached the stage of trust. The belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is not *trust*. 4. Abraham had long believed in the true and living God, while this initial faith of the Pentecostians is their *first* belief regarding the divinity and Lordship of Jesus. It corresponds, not to Abraham's trusting in God for a great blessing, but to his first knowledge about God. This is their first true knowledge of Christ and his character, as that was Abraham's first knowledge of God and his character. Between this and Abraham's later act of faith there lay an important experience; between this initial belief before repentance and the faith that will be counted for righteousness, there must lie, with the sinner, some important experience. 5. Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness *immediately*, without requiring any subsequent condition; this initial belief of the Pentecostians cannot be so counted. It must be followed by both repentance and obedience.

Thus it appears that there is a misfit at every point. Nor are these discrepancies superficial and unimportant. They involve the very character of the faith itself. Is there, then, any better way of reconciliation?

Let it be observed that we arrived at the existence of the initial belief, in this series of steps belonging to the Petrine statement, by *inference*. The inference

was perfectly clear and certain, but it *was* inference. The word *believe*, *belief*, or *faith* does not occur in Peter's language. The fact of the existence of this initial belief, its place, and its character are reached by pure inference. Now, perhaps, by a careful examination of what took place, we may be enabled to find something else in this transaction by a method equally trustworthy.

Peter tells the inquiring multitude to repent and be baptized unto the remission of their sins. By placing remission of sins in baptism, he causes the appropriative spiritual act to take place *there*, and makes baptism the spiritual-physical act of laying hold on salvation, and Christ its Author. Or rather, since the physical part belongs alone to the administrator, baptism becomes to the candidate the purely spiritual act of appropriation. at the point where the blessing is offered. Let there be no mistake here. The convert may *resolve* to do this before, and may thus look forward with anticipative trust to the possession of this salvation, but he *appropriates* it here. He does not seek to lay hold on anything where he knows it is not to be had. The appropriative spiritual act is, therefore, here. What, now, is the nature of this act? It is the beginning of *Christian* faith,—the faith of the Christian life,—the beginning of actual personal clinging to Christ, of union with him. It is, first, an act of appropriation, and then continues as possession. All former trust has been the anticipation of what, by actual self-surrender and appropriation, has now become a *fact*. This is the first moment of personal, possessive trust in Christ, of faith as we find it in the Christian life.

Thus, by a process of inference as certain as that

by which we discovered the presence of the initial belief, we reach another form of faith in the Pentecostal conditions, very different in character and place from that first considered. As this stands accredited by precisely the same kind of evidence as that which supports the other, why seek to find the secret link with which to reconcile the Pentecostal statement with that of the argument in Romans, in one of these forms of faith rather than in the other? If the last form be supposed to be the one which Paul has specially in mind in his argument on justification, we shall have the following concordances:

1. This faith is *trust*, the permanent trust of Christian life; Abraham's faith to which Paul refers, was *trust*, and the permanent trust of his life. No other elements are added to the faith afterward, in either case. We have in each case not one of the constituent elements of faith, but the finished product.

2. This faith springs out of a loyal heart, a heart made loyal by repentance: Abraham's faith sprang out of a loyal heart.

3. This faith is not followed by repentance: Abraham's was not.

4. This faith comes later than that belief which constitutes the first knowledge of Christ in his true character; Abraham's faith that was said to be reckoned for righteousness came later than his first knowledge of the true God.

5. This faith brings remission of sins immediately; Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness immediately.

6. Paul puts justification, with death to sin, in baptism (Rom. vi. 7); Peter puts remission of sins in baptism.

7. Paul teaches that we become sons of God by putting on Christ in baptism (Gal. iii. 27), and that, because of this, the spirit of adoption is bestowed (ch. iv. 6); Peter teaches that the gift of the Holy Spirit follows upon baptism (Acts ii. 38).

Thus it appears that the attempt to find a bond of harmony between these two forms of statement, through the initial belief of the understanding, which takes place before repentance, involves difficulties at every point; while, by making this final form of faith in conversion the basis of reconciliation, perfect harmony in every particular is reached. Can there then remain any doubt along which of these lines the adjustment between these two forms of statement is to be sought?

§ *2. The Second Method.*

Another method of reconciliation is that adopted by those who regard faith as reaching its consummation before baptism, and as being the sole condition of justification.

Those who take this view are wont to derive their conclusion directly from Paul's argument on justification, and to seek to interpret all other passages in harmony with the supposed teaching of this. While the position just considered starts from Acts ii. 38, this starts from Rom. iii. and iv. It is held that Paul makes faith the only condition of justification; that he mentions no other; and that, in selecting his typical example—and the fundamental proof of his position—out of the Old Testament history, he chooses the one case in which faith, without being followed by any subsequent act, was counted for righteousness. As the counting of Abraham's faith

for righteousness took place immediately, without waiting for any subsequent act, and as baptism is regarded as taking place *after* the act of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, it is therefore ruled out as a condition of justification. As this is regarded as being clearly Paul's teaching, it is held that the language of no inspired writer must be so construed as to conflict with it.

Now Peter's statement to the inquiring multitude on the day of Pentecost was: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts ii. 38). In the phrase "unto the remission of your sins," the Greek word rendered "unto" is εἰς, and its common meaning is *into*, *unto*, or *in order to*. As this is inconsistent with the position assumed, there are several methods resorted to for the purpose of avoiding this sense. One of these is to give εἰς the sense of "because of," thus making baptism *because of*, instead of *in order to*, the remission of sins. This meaning of εἰς is not recognized by the world's scholarship, but it is thought to be justified by Mt. iii. 11, where it is held that it must have that meaning, inasmuch as baptism cannot be *in order to*, but must be *because of*, repentance. But, as it has been shown that εἰς, when taken in its recognized sense of *unto* or *in order to* in this passage, not only gives a good sense, but expresses most happily the exact state of the case, the argument drawn from this source is without force. It is only necessary to add that the lack of linguistic support for this meaning of εἰς, and the difficulty of fitting it into the passage, have caused it to be aban-

doned in favor of another rendering.* It is proposed to give εἰς the sense of "with respect to," which is found among the remote meanings of the word in the lexicons, and understand this "with respect to" as meaning *because of*. "With respect to" gives us no information regarding the relation of baptism to remission of sins, and leaves us free to understand any sense we choose, provided we can make it tally with the context. As the phrase *with respect to* does not convey the meaning *because of*, nor even hint at it, the question arises, Can we get it out of the context? Peter's language in Acts ii. 38 is in answer to the question of the multitude, "What shall we do?" in *v.* 37; and this agonizing question sprang out of, and had reference to, the guilt that Peter had charged upon them in *v.* 36. They are asking, therefore, what they must do to be free from their guilt. Peter's answer is, that they shall repent and be baptized *with respect to* this object, in which case *with respect to* would clearly have the force of *in order to*. By no possibility could Peter's hearers understand *with respect to* to mean *because of* remission, unless they already knew that repentance was the only condition of remission. This they could not know or think, for it was not so in the Jewish law. They *did* not know it, or they would not have needed to ask him what to do. Further, we may say that they *did* know that *repentance* was a condition of remission, and their only reason for asking him what to do was the supposition that there might be some other condition; and thus they were prepared to hear Peter mention some added condition. When, therefore, he

* See a pamphlet by Dr. Lasher entitled, "*What Did Peter Mean?*"

commands them to repent and be baptized *with respect to* the remission of their sins, knowing as they do that they are now guilty, there can be but one understanding of his language, viz., that they are to repent and be baptized *in order to* remission. Thus, while the linguistic warrant for *with respect to* is better than that for *because of*, it fails to give the sense *because of* itself, and the context not only does not furnish it, but absolutely rules it out. But the linguistic warrant for rendering εἰς by *with respect to* in this passage is not good. It does not follow because a certain meaning can be found in the remote senses of a word, that we are at liberty to read it into any place we choose. Now, none of the translations, or lexicons, or grammars render εἰς in this passage by *with respect to*, but our great standard authorities all render it by some term having the force of *unto* or *in order to*. This proposed rendering is without support of the world's scholarship.

Another method by which it is sought to avoid the sense of *in order to* remission, is to allow εἰς its ordinary telic sense,—*unto* or *in order to*,—but take the phrase as meaning to be *baptized unto or into the profession of the belief and reception of the doctrine that remission of sins is granted through Christ*.* So remote is this from anything that Peter's words can convey, that we should find it hard to believe that it was not travesty did we not know that it was seriously advocated, and that it draws its authority from a supposed necessary meaning of Mt. iii. 11. It is held that εἰς must mean *unto*, and that, as John could not have baptized the people unto repentance,

* See Campbell and Rice Debate, pp. 489, 500, and Braden and Hughey Debate, pp. 207, 235.

he must have baptized them unto the *profession* of repentance; and it is sought to explain the language of Acts ii. 38, in a similar way. But when it is seen that there is no need of resorting to such an extreme alternative in Mt. iii. 11, all shadow of probability vanishes from this proposed interpretation of Acts ii. 38, and its mere announcement becomes its refutation. There is no stronger evidence that Peter's language in this passage makes baptism a condition of remission of sins than that its denial involves such desperate alternatives.

I shall now proceed to state a few facts which I think none will be disposed to question.

1. For centuries, the word εἰς in Acts ii. 38, was translated in our authorized version by the preposition "for," a word which may mean either *because of* or *in order to*. In the Revised Version, which represents the present scholarship of the English speaking world, the word "for" has been replaced by "unto," a word which does not signify *because of*. The English revisers worked in co-operation with an American committee. After carefully comparing notes, if there was finally any disagreement between the two committees, the American committee embodied its view in certain supplementary notes, which are found at the end of the volume. Now, in the substitution of "unto" for "for" in this passage the English and American committees were in entire accord; hence the decision of the representative scholarship of both continents, as late as the year 1881, was not that εἰς means *because of*, or any word which could be so construed, but *unto*.

Again, in making their revision there were many

cases in which the meaning was not absolutely certain; and, while one of two or more meanings was preferred by the committees, the other meanings, being regarded as having some probability in their favor, were inserted in the margin, giving the reader the benefit of both renderings. But no alternative marginal reading was thought, by either the English or the American committee, to be required in the translation of εἰς in this passage. Thus, as late as 1881, the representative English scholarship of both continents, after careful research, determined without hesitation or doubt that the preposition εἰς in this passage means *unto*.

2. The American Bible Union (Baptist), whose version appeared some years before, also rendered this preposition by the same word, *unto*.

3. Many scholarly commentators, of different nations, render the word by *unto* or by some equivalent term, and construe the passage so as to make baptism a condition of the remission of sins. Among these may be mentioned Meyer, who says that "εἰς denotes the *object* of the baptism, which is the remission of the guilt contracted in the state before μετάνοια" (repentance), and Lange's *Commentary*, which says concerning this passage: "Baptism is a divine act, in so far as God separates the individual from a perverse and sinful generation, remits his sins, and bestows the Holy Ghost upon him." Dr. Hackett, the noted Baptist commentator, renders the phrase by the words "*in order to the forgiveness of sins*," and says: "We connect naturally with both the preceding verbs. This clause states the motive or object which should induce them to repent and be baptized. It enforces

the entire exhortation, not one part of it to the exclusion of the other." *

The late Prof. Robert T. Mathews, formerly Dean of the Bible College of Drake University, in 1876 wrote to professors in eight leading colleges and universities in this country, asking the following question: "Will you be so kind as to give me your translation of the preposition εἰς in Acts ii. 38, and your opinion, as a Greek scholar, as to what grammatical relation it expresses between the predicates of the verse and the phrase *aphesin hamartion?* I shall be obliged for your answer in the light of scholarship, aside from all theological applications of the verse." From the answers received I make the following extracts: †

Prof. Tyler, of Amherst, would express the sense of the passage thus: "Repent and let every one of you be baptized *to the end* that your sins may be forgiven."

Prof. N. C. Cameron, of Princeton, says: "The preposition εἰς, in Acts ii. 38, is evidently used in its final sense, and the phrase is clearly connected with *metanoēsate kai baptistheti* (repent and be baptized) as the end to which repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus, led."

Prof. Packard, of Yale University, would translate the clause classically so as to read, "*to the end* of remission of sins," and says: "It would then make *aphesin hamartiōn* [remission of sins] an object aimed at, or a result attained by the acts denoted by the verbs."

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* *Com. on Acts, in loco.*

† These answers may be found in the able work of L. B. Wilkes on *Designs of Christian Baptism*, p. 188, from which these extracts are taken. The quotations are not in full.

Prof. Foster, of Colby, says that the word here has the force of "'unto,' 'in order to,' 'for the sake of,' indicating a result to be attained and that it connects the phrase *aphesin hamartiōn* with both the foregoing imperative verbs, alike grammatically considered, though, on other grounds, I shall say specially with the first, since pardon is nowhere offered on condition of baptism alone, while it is on that of repentance."

Prof. D'Ooge, of Ann Arbor, says that "*eis*, in the verse referred to, expresses the relation of aim or end in view" and he would translate it "unto," "in order to," "for." He further says: "This sense of *eis*, as you doubtless know, is recognized by Liddell and Scott for classical, by Winer, for New Testament, usage."

Prof. Flagg, of Cornell, says that *eis* in this passage "denoted intention or purpose, 'with a view to' much as if it had been written, 'so as to obtain remission of sins.'" This is his view from the standpoint of classical Greek.

Prof. Proctor, of Dartmouth College, says: "It is my opinion that *eis* is to be connected with both predicates, and that it denotes an object or end in view."

Prof. Harkness, of Brown University, says: "In my opinion *eis*, in Acts ii. 38, denotes *purpose*, and may be rendered 'in order to,' or 'for the purpose of receiving,' or, as in our English version, 'for.' '*Eis aphesin hamartiōn*' suggests the motive or object contemplated in the action of the two preceding verbs."

The view of Prof. Thayer, of Harvard, is probably reflected in his *N. T. Greek Lexicon*, from which I quote under the next head.

4. The great standard lexicons give the word the

same meaning. Regarding this passage, Thayer's *N. T. Greek Lexicon* says, "εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, to obtain the forgiveness of sins, Acts ii. 38."

Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of N. T. Greek* says: "By βαπτιζειν therefore we must understand a *washing whose design*, like that of the theocratic washings and purifications, *was to purge away sin* from him on whom it was performed." Among other citations under this head he refers to Acts ii. 38.

To this I may add that Winer, in his *Grammar of N. T. Greek*, represents εἰς in this passage as denoting "the purpose and end in view."*

These citations present an ample array of the ripest scholarship of our time. On their bearing I need not pause to dwell, and shall proceed to add to them another class of facts, drawn from quite a different source.†

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*Grammar, § 49, c. s. p. 397.

†Since writing the above the question has appeared in the query department of *The Biblical World*, edited by William R. Harper, President of Chicago University.

The query was: "(1) What is the meaning of the Greek preposition *eis* in Mt. 10:41, 12:41; Rom. 4:20? (2) If the preposition in these cases looks to things already received or done, is there any grammatical reason why it should not so look to repentance, in Mt. iii. 11, and in Acts ii. 38?"

The answers given are as follows: "(1) The preposition means 'at,' 'looking at'; is nearly equivalent to 'in reponse to.' (2) There is no strictly grammatical reason why it should not have the same force in Mt. iii. 11, and Acts ii. 38; but the telic force is so much more common, and so much more obvious in these latter cases, that the writer would probably have chosen some other form of expression, less open to misunderstanding, if he had desired to express the idea you suggest. It is a general principle of *interpretation*, that an unusual sense must not be given to a word in a connection in which the usual sense is more appropriate and more obvious, because it is the habit of men in *writing* or *speaking* to avoid using a word in an unusual sense where a more usual is obviously suggested. To do otherwise in speaking would be to expose oneself to not only the danger, but almost the certainty, of being misunderstood. To

On Peter's confession of the Messiahship and divinity of Jesus, he was told (Mt. xvi. 19) that unto him should be given the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and, in pursuance of this promise, it was Peter who opened the kingdom to the Jewish people on the day of Pentecost, and later, through miraculous guidance, to the Gentiles, at the household of Cornelius. After the commission had been given, just before Christ ascended to heaven, the apostles were not permitted to undertake its execution until they were miraculously endowed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts i. 4, 5). They were not permitted to open the doors of the kingdom to men, until they could do so under the guidance of inspiration, and they were required to *wait*. Why must they wait? We are not told, but in the counsels of Heaven there was a reason. The time actually chosen for the manifestation of this great miracle and the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, was the great Pentecostal gathering, when the representatives of fifteen nations might behold the miracle and hear the first gospel sermon from the lips of an apostle, and carry that gospel, so attested, to their homes in distant lands.

Thus qualified by divine inspiration, and in accordance with the promise of Christ, Peter preaches the sermon on that occasion—the most epochal sermon ever preached, unless it be the Sermon on the Mount. He concludes his sermon with these words: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye have crucified" (Acts ii. 36). Like a dart this sentence pierces the souls of thousands;

do otherwise in interpretation is to ignore the fact that the rules of interpretation are simply the converse of the habits of expression."—*Biblical World*, Feb., 1899, p. 141.

and in terror and remorse they cry out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" A vast multitude were knocking at the door of the kingdom, but they had not entered, and did not know how to enter. One more sentence (Acts ii. 38), and they enter. *That sentence was the* KEY *to the kingdom of heaven.** From that hour it was carried all over the world. It was the typical answer for the convicted inquirer, for all nations and through all time. If it be not correct, or be misleading in statement, irreparable mischief was done, and on an immense scale.

Now let us notice some other facts regarding this epochal sentence, this key to the kingdom.

For several centuries in our standard translation (the Authorized Version) the word εἰς in this passage has been represented by the English word "for,"—"*for* the remission of sins." Now, by turning to Webster's International Dictionary we find the following given as the primary definition of *for:* "Indicating the antecedent cause or occasion of an action; the motive or inducement accompanying and prompting to an act or state; the reason of anything; that on account of which a thing is or is done." Of these statements of the primary sense of *for* it is clear that the first has the meaning of *because of.* Were there any doubt of this it would be removed by noting the first example quoted under this definition, "With fiery eyes sparkling *for* very wrath." It is evident that

*Says Alford: "Another personal promise to Peter, remarkably fulfilled in his being the first to admit both Jews and Gentiles into the church; thus using the power of the keys to open the door of salvation."—See Lange's *Com., in loco.*

While it is probable that this promise to give Peter the keys of the kingdom refers to the general fact that he was to open it to men, it is yet true, as a matter of fact, that it was by this *one* sentence that he opened it.

the "sparkling" is *because of* the "wrath." This, therefore, is a primary meaning of the word *for*. The second definition is this: "Indicating the remoter and indirect object of an act; the end or final cause with reference to which anything is, acts, serves, or is done." Here we have the sense *in order to*, but it is a secondary sense of the word. *Because of*, therefore, is the primary meaning of *for**, while *in order to* is a secondary meaning. Now, it is not held by those who think that εἰς means *because of* in Acts ii. 38, that such is its primary or leading sense, nor even that it is its secondary or even tertiary sense; but that in a very few exceptional cases it has this meaning.

Hence it is clear that this rendering of the word by "for" is far more favorable to the meaning *because of* than is the original word εἰς.

Now, in connection with this advantage gained by the use of this ambiguous word in the A. V., which was for so long the standard version of the people, let us note one remarkable fact: *This answer of Peter was never given to inquirers by those who held that remission of sins precedes baptism.* How is this explained? A translation confessedly more favorable to this view than the original itself—and yet the divinely authorized key to the kingdom—the official answer designed for that very purpose—can not be given to inquirers! The first and official answer to inquirers, uttered in the ear of all nations, can not now be used in the inquiry room. I do not mean that it is simply overlooked or neglected, but that it must be positively *ruled out*. Is this statement correct? The writer's own personal ministry dates back more than thirty years. During this time he has never known of a

*The Standard Dictionary also places this definition first.

case where this answer was given to inquirers by those holding this view; but a number of cases have come to his knowledge in which it was positively declined. I am credibly informed that Mr. Moody never gave this answer to inquirers, and that, on various occasions when requested to do so, he positively declined.* I believe that the general fact here stated will not be disputed, and it is therefore unnecessary to dwell upon it. That its full significance and bearing are not realized, I cannot doubt. The situation is truly a surprising one. Peter's answer to the Pentecostians was *inspired,* it was *official;* it was designed for *inquirers* and for *no other class;* it was uttered to the *common people*, in a public assembly, and addressed to the level common sense of mankind—and yet it cannot be trusted now in precisely the same situation, even when translated so as unduly to favor the prevailing view.

It seems to be felt that this language, if uttered before a popular audience, or in the inquiry room, would be misleading. Yet it was uttered by Peter before a popular audience of inquirers, and, if it cannot now be used in the same position, even with an unduly favoring translation, without misleading the people, is there any escape from the conclusion that Peter—wittingly or unwittingly—misled the Jewish people, and through them, the fifteen nations among whom his message was borne by his auditors? In all candor, does not a position which involves such an alternative need reconsidering?

Within the last generation there have been two

*See *Christian Standard*, Cincinnati, bearing date of Apr. 3, 1897, where two instances of such declination are related and vouched for.

great translations—that of the American Bible Union, under Baptist auspices, and the Revised Version, undenominational. Yet so overwhelmingly does the *construction* of this passage point to baptism as a condition of the remission of sins, that neither in the old translation, nor in either of these versions, can the passage be used by those holding to pre-baptismal remission. There still remains but one thing to do—to exclude it from its appointed use.*

Under no translation which the scholarship of the world will sanction can that official utterance of Peter, which opened the kingdom of heaven to the world, be used for a like purpose now. The questions which press about this surprising fact are very urgent. All cannot be right when such a momentous utterance as this must be silenced. No doubt it is felt by those who adopt this method of adjustment between the teachings of Paul on justification and the language of Peter in this passage, that this is preferable to any view which would suspend the remission of sins on the performance of a mere ceremony; but can any one claim that a method of adjustment which involves such consequences is entirely satisfactory? A choice between two evils we must make when we cannot do better, but such a situation generally points to a need of more light. Is there not a better way?

Let us now suppose another method to be adopted, and note the result. Let Peter's statement be taken

*It is to be noted that this overwhelming fact bears not alone against that interpretation which would make *eis* mean *because of*, but equally against every explanation which seeks to place remission of sins before baptism. This apostolic answer must be excluded from the inquiry room by all classes who take this view.

just as it reads, giving to his words their obvious meaning. Repentance and baptism will then be unto, or in order to, the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and baptism will be the final condition in reaching these blessings. What is reached through baptism is elsewhere described by Peter as salvation (1 Pet. iii. 21, compared also with Mk. xvi. 16 and Titus iii. 5). The teaching of Peter, therefore, will be that baptism is the final condition in reaching remission of sins, or justification, or, more comprehensively, salvation. What now will be the effect of this teaching on his hearers? It will cause the spiritual act of appropriation, of laying hold on Christ's salvation—the faith that saves—to take place in baptism. Let there be no misunderstanding here. The candidate has *resolved* to do this before, but the mental act of taking Christ as his present Savior—of appropriating his salvation and of entering into union with him—will take place *where these things are possible;* and all that goes before will be, not factual, but purposive, and belong to repentance. A lady may resolve to accede to a suitor's request to become his wife, but in that resolve she does not take him as her husband, but *determines* to do so; and she does not do so, even mentally, till the appointed time when this shall take place. This mental act then, according to its nature, receives external investiture, and becomes marriage. This is the appropriative act, mentally as well as formally. In like manner the sinner, according to divine appointment, appropriates Christ's salvation when they meet and form their union. It is now that he mentally puts on Christ (Gal. iii. 27), this mental act, like

the mental act in marriage, demanding external investiture, and for analogous reasons.

Again, if a man be commanded by God to perform a certain act, and be told that, on condition of doing so, he shall be accepted and pardoned, it is at that point that his *surrender* will naturally take place. Any surrender made while delaying to obey the command would be a surrender in disobedience, or a false surrender. The man will realize that such a surrender cannot be acceptable, and will refrain from making it, but will, instead, obey the command as soon as possible, thus committing himself to the divine service and to the divine care. If this command shall embrace an act of profession, it is there that his surrender will take place. Any surrender made while delaying this would be lacking in the true spirit of obedience.

There could arise only one question in regard to this, and that not relating to the convert, but to God's course in demanding profession as a condition of pardon. But, as has already been shown in an earlier part of this work, there are moral, spiritual, and practical reasons why this should be so. Even though the person should not understand these reasons, he will be aware of the divine requirement, and will not venture to offer himself to God under conditions which he has reason to believe would not be acceptable.

Thus this faith, both in its aspect of surrender and commitment to Christ, and as an act of appropriation —a laying hold on Christ, resting in him as saved, and entering into union with him—will, by the conditions of Peter's statement of the gospel, be caused to take place in baptism. It is there that receiving

Christ (Jno. i. 12), coming to him (Jno. vi. 35), and obeying him (Jno. iii. 36)—which are but different names for *believing on* him—will take place. Or, if we give a broader sense to the expression, it is there that *believing on* Christ will reach its consummation. The placing of remission of sins or salvation, in baptism, therefore, causes the appropriative spiritual act to take place there, and *baptism for remission of sins* becomes but another expression for *justification by faith*. And when we reflect that baptism is simply and only a spiritual act on the part of the candidate, and that the divine part in it—the remission of sins and adoption to sonship—is also purely spiritual, we see that this is exactly what it is—*justification by faith;* faith on the human side, justification on the divine side. Now, when we have reached this point, the work of reconciling Paul's argument on justification with Peter's language on the day of Pentecost, has been accomplished. Difficulties break away in every direction. Does Paul say justification is by faith? So it is. Does justification come immediately in response to faith, with Abraham—the case from which Paul argues? So it does with the convert. As the heart springs to God in this holy act (faith) the Divine Father meets it, Spirit to spirit, and grants the blessing (justification). Faith does not wait, but at its birth receives the kiss of sonship. Justification is granted *directly* to faith.

But while the justification is ascribed directly to the faith and takes place immediately, the very moral and spiritual nature of this faith calls for investiture; and the fact that it possesses such investiture is in no way inconsistent with Paul's language regarding it.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MORAL ADJUSTMENT.

It is not my purpose to examine the causes leading up to the remarkable attitude of so large a part of modern Christendom toward certain passages of the New Testament relating to baptism, as shown in the preceding chapter, but to consider an influence now acting with great power to perpetuate that condition. This influence has its source in nothing less than an intuition of the human mind, and is well expressed by Dr. McCosh when he says: "*It is of mental, and mental acts exclusively, that the conscience judges.* It has no judgment whatever to pronounce on a mere bodily act."* The conscience has always spoken thus, but its pronouncements are now more distinct and influential than they were in the earlier centuries. Some of the views held in certain ages of the church, and which were not incompatible with the thought of their time, are utterly repugnant to our moral sensibilities. There can be no doubt that the long result of Christianity has been to clarify and strengthen man's moral perceptions, and that the revolt against many things once tolerated, or even welcomed by the human mind, springs from the heart of Christianity itself.

Now, if baptism be regarded as a mere outward or physical act taking place after all the spiritual steps of conversion have been taken, the whole force of this pronouncement of our moral nature will lie against it as a condition of the remission of sins. It is felt

* *Method of the Divine Government*, p. 336.

to have no rightful place among the conditions of pardon and divine acceptance. The difficulty does not lie in any *injustice* involved in making a mere ceremonial act a condition of pardon, for pardon is not a matter of justice, but of clemency, and we are saved, if at all, by grace, not by merit; but to suspend so vital a matter on so trifling and arbitrary a condition is felt to be inconsistent with the character of a wise and benevolent God, and to savor of the caprice of some barbarian ruler. This moral incongruity is hardly less repellent to our moral instincts than a direct violation of moral law. This demand for ethical consistency in the conditions of salvation is felt by all classes, and has given rise to various attempts to find some statement of the doctrine of baptism which will be in harmony with it. The Disciples of Christ have always taught that baptism is a condition of remission of sins, and many of them have been content to rest in a "thus saith the Lord," without troubling themselves about moral adjustments, but many more have felt strongly the weight of the moral objection, and have sought to relieve its stress. It has been urged that an act which springs from faith partakes of the valuable and spiritual qualities of the faith which prompts it, and that, therefore, it is just as worthy to be made a condition of remission of sins as the faith itself. Let this be granted, and it would fail to prove that it is *more* worthy than the faith, so that what had already been denied to the faith alone should be granted to this. If an *act* of faith derives all its virtue from the faith it exemplifies, why does not this faith, as it exists before the act, contain all this virtue? and, if the *act* may be counted for righteousness because of the faith

from which it proceeds, why should not the faith itself be so counted before the act? It must be shown that the *act* of faith possesses some value which the faith itself does not possess, before any reason can be made to appear why justification should be denied to faith, but granted to an act of faith.

Mr. Campbell in the McCalla debate, in 1823, took the position that persons are "really pardoned" when they believe, but receive "formal acquittal" at their baptism, but he presents the matter in a somewhat different light in his later writings.* In the Campbell and Rice debate, in 1843, his position was that he who believes "is justified, is pardoned, has eternal life . . . in hope, in anticipation"†—that he has these blessings "not in actual possession, but in promise, in expectation, in grant, or in hope,"‡ and that he comes into *actual* possession of them in baptism. In his work on *Baptism*, published in 1851, he makes baptism a condition of "true, real, and formal remission of sins" (p. 258), of "justification" (p. 260) of adoption (p. 276), of the assurance of pardon (p. 260), and of the change of our "spiritual relations to the Divine Persons whose names are put upon us in the very act" (p. 256). This embraces about all that is usually supposed to be connected with remission of sins, and seems to leave room for little if anything more than a change of feeling on the part of God toward the penitent before his baptism. There can be little objection to this; but, if faith be regarded as preceding baptism, and if justification be made to depend, not on faith, but on faith *plus* something else (baptism), it will not be easy to reconcile this with Paul's lan-

* See Appendix C., p. 457. † *Debate*, p. 457. ‡ *Ib.*, p. 469.

guage regarding justification by faith. In the effort to do this it has been urged that faith is not perfect till it issues in works. James has said that Abraham's faith was "made perfect" by works when he offered up Isaac, and that it was then "reckoned unto him for righteousness" (ch. ii. 22, 23). It is argued that, in like manner, the convert's faith does not become perfect so that it can be reckoned for righteousness, until it issues in baptism. But it must be remembered that James's reference to the offering of Isaac by Abraham was to an event which occurred many years after Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness (Gen. xv. 6) without works, and that Paul founds his entire argument on this case in Gen. xv. 6, without referring to the offering of Isaac at all; and, if it be true that Abraham's faith was not "made perfect" until he offered up Isaac, it will simply prove that it was counted to him for righteousness *before* it was made perfect; and if Abraham's faith was counted for righteousness before it was perfect, the convert's may be also. So the argument which assumes that none but a perfect faith can justify is wholly irrelevant. If Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness *without* works before Isaac was born (Gen. xv. 6), and if it was counted for righteousness many years after *with* works when he offered up Isaac (Jas. ii. 22), it follows that it was so counted more than once; and Paul chooses that case in which it was counted for righteousness *without* works as the type answering to Christian conversion. Even if it were true that faith could not be counted for righteousness until first "made perfect" by works, it would not apply to baptism. James is not arguing to induce his readers to be baptized, for they were all

professors of Christianity, but to dissuade them from the neglect of the duties of the Christian life. If it be still thought that, while he had no such thing in mind, the principle must have been held to include baptism, we have positive evidence, as already shown, that baptism was not, in the apostolic age, placed in the category of works at all.* Baptism is not a work, but a purely spiritual act on the part of the candidate, and that act appropriative *faith*—the putting on of Christ. If, therefore, it should be shown that faith could not be counted for righteousness until first "made perfect" by works, it would simply prove that baptism must be followed by some work of righteousness before remission of sins could be received.

It is also urged that Paul affirms justification of those who "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision" (Rom. iv. 12), and that walking in Abraham's steps applies to the conduct of his life of faith, embracing his deeds. But a little attention to the statement and its context will show this to be unwarranted. The walking is not in the steps of Abraham's *deeds*, but of his *faith;* and Paul is particular to state that he is referring to an event in Abraham's life anterior to his circumcision, one which took place long before the offering of Isaac. Paul has not this event, nor even this period of Abraham's life, in mind in his argument on justification. Then, Paul particularizes still farther in the context. In verse 3 he quotes the language of Gen. xv. 6: "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness," and proceeds to argue directly from this. In verse 9 he refers to the same passage again, and then proceeds to show

* See Titus iii. 5.

that this reckoning of faith for righteousness occurred before Abraham's circumcision; then he announces the purpose of circumcision, and concludes that Abraham, by the priority of this faith to circumcision, became the father not only of them of the circumcision, but also of all those who "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision." Paul is arguing directly from this one passage in Gen. xv. 6, and not only refers to nothing else, but shows by continued reference that he has nothing else in mind. To bring in the case which James refers to regarding the offering of Isaac, which Paul specially excludes, or to push back the reference to Abraham's call, recorded in Gen. xii. and referred to in Heb. xi. 8, is of the nature of evasion rather than of interpretation. It seems to me that the argument of those who have been wont to reason so clearly and convincingly in most of their deductions from the Scriptures, has always labored at this point. Evasion has taken the place of clear and forceful argument, revealing some latent weakness in the position taken. So far as my observation extends, those who hold that baptism is a condition of the remission of sins, have little use for Gen. xv. 6, while those who deny this have no use for Acts ii. 38 and kindred passages. Things do not seem satisfactory from either point of view. Any effort to bring works in as any part of Paul's condition of the justification of the sinner, must hopelessly fail; and if it could succeed it would have no application to baptism, which Paul denies to be a work, and which is in reality nothing but a spiritual act on the part of the candidate, and that act appropriative faith itself.

Another means by which it is sought to avoid the moral incongruity of making a mere physical or ceremonial act a condition of remission of sins consists in removing baptism entirely from the conditions of remission and making it a sequent to justification. This view, which has been adopted by so large a part of Protestant Christendom, involves not only serious difficulties of interpretation, as before shown, but a moral difficulty also. In seeking to escape moral incongruity it runs into a breach of moral law: for baptism is not a mere physical or ceremonial act, but a *moral* act, and a moral act of such character that its postponement for a single day—unless its performance be impossible—involves a continuance in sin. Baptism, as the great act of Christian profession, is (with the verbal confession which goes with it) the means of stopping the perpetuation of one of the sins of the past life; and, as it can usually be performed very speedily, the doctrine that the penitent may be pardoned immediately on his acceptance of Christ, before baptism, and that he may then select his own time for making a profession somewhere in the early future, involves the fact of pardon while the subject is still continuing in sin. This view carries the "method of inwardness" to the point of a breach of moral law.

But if these methods of adjustment are not satisfactory, the question returns, How shall we bring the conditions of salvation into accord with the principles of moral law? If our meaning be that the conditions of remission of sins shall be made *entirely ethical*, this cannot be done without destroying Christianity: if it be that they shall be brought into *harmony* with moral law, this is easily done, and has already been done in

the gospel as it now stands. If our object be to make the conditions of salvation entirely ethical, we shall find it necessary to exclude, not only baptism, but faith in Christ also, from those conditions. The only condition of remission which moral law imperatively demands is *repentance*.* To remit a man's sins while he is still clinging to them, and determined to continue them, would be immoral. It would be to acquiesce in his sin, and give it encouragement. On the other hand, moral law lays no requirement on a man but that he be earnestly intent on doing right, and that he *do* it. But conscience founds its judgment, as we have seen, not on the external act, but on the mental state from which that act proceeds; and as repentance puts a man into the right-doing mental state, conscience pronounces its judgment of approval there. The demand that he shall perform acts of righteousness is involved in the demand that he shall possess the right-doing state of mind, for he who does not perform them does not possess this state, and he who possesses it performs them. But, as repentance does not free us from the guilt of past misdeeds, and as it is itself, like all human acts, imperfect, our justification must still be an act of clemency, a pardon; but, as moral law lays on man no other demand than that he shall have the right-doing state of mind, repentance is the only condition of pardon which it imposes. The belief of a certain proposition regarding a certain man who lived in Judæa at a

* If it be thought that this is inconsistent with the statement that moral law demands that men shall profess Christ, it need only be said that moral law does not demand that the belief of certain facts about Christ shall be made a condition of remission; but, when these facts are once believed, it becomes a moral duty to profess him, and a man is continuing in sin so long as he delays it.

certain time is as extra-ethical as the performance of a physical act. Intellectual belief is not a moral act. But take away this intellectual belief of a proposition, and you destroy Christianity, and have only naturalism left. Moral law demands simply that a man shall do right, regardless of his views on any particular subject. If this intellectual belief is to hold its place in the conditions of justification, we must find some other reason for it than that moral law directly demands it. That reason appears plainly in the writings of the New Testament, and is founded in the broad fact of human weakness. The man who repents cannot live a righteous life without help. Christianity is God's mighty arm reached down to help him. God regards his repentance with a feeling of approval, but does not remit his sins at that point, because it would do him no good, and would even do him harm by leading him to believe that he was safe; but he makes remission depend on the penitent's laying hold on the saving forces of Christianity, through which his rescue from sin becomes possible. But the helping power of Christianity is not single, but double, embracing both Christ and his earthly body, the church. The same reason that demands that we shall enter into union with Christ, demands that we shall also enter into union with his church, as a condition of remission of sins; and these things which belong together in reason, the gospel has placed together in performance. We enter into union with Christ and unite with his church by the same act, baptism. Faith in Christ and baptism, as conditions of remission, stand or fall together. Neither is an ethical condition in the sense of being an absolute demand of moral law, but, viewed in their

true light, neither presents any moral difficulty. It is perfectly consistent that God should require a man to place himself in connection with the saving forces which make rescue from sin possible, before bestowing on him the *favor* of canceling his past and graciously counting him—what only these forces can make him—a righteous man. The true method of ethical adjustment does not lie in excluding baptism (profession) from the conditions of remission, but in drawing the line between absolutely ethical, and practical, conditions, and then frankly recognizing that faith in Christ and baptism belong to the latter class. When these are taken for what they are they give no offense as moral incongruities.

As soon as we recognize baptism as a condition of remission, the spiritual act of appropriative faith, by a law of the heart, takes place in it and we at once find that the connection is not one of mere coincidence in time, but one in which faith takes on certain qualities that fit it to be the condition of justification. The demand that profession shall take place before divine acceptance, raises faith to the stature of a world-conquering force at the point where it undertakes the Christian life, by denying it recognition until it faces the world in profession; and it then measures that force for the information of the candidate. It also causes the spiritual act of putting on Christ—appropriative faith—to take place under conditions which shall render it the strongest, best-considered, and most enduring act of which the soul is capable. If men are to be justified by faith, that spiritual act —faith—should not be one of inferior quality, but a well-considered, strong, enduring, well-fortified mental act; and men have from time immemorial

caused important mental acts of covenant and contract to possess these qualities, by causing them to take place in some form of *profession* that put the will to the strain and interposed strong motives against retreat. This is done in business transactions as a safeguard not only against dishonesty, but against human shiftlessness, indolence, changeableness, and weakness. These influences affect the Christian life as well as business, and it is as important that faith should take place under conditions fitted to protect against them, as that any business transaction should do so. Therefore the faith that is accepted in justification should take place in a deeply impressive and public act of profession. To this, moral law and common sense unite to say *amen*.

If faith be regarded as a coming to Christ or an appropriation of Christ (Jn. vi. 35), a receiving of Christ (Jn. i. 12), a putting on of Christ (Gal. iii. 26, 27) and entrance into union with him, and if this spiritual act be understood to take place in baptism, where the language of the Scriptures places it, the view not only falls into perfect accord with all that Paul says on justification by faith, and with the entire language of the Scriptures regarding baptism, but encounters no moral difficulties, since baptism for the remission of sins rests on the same rational basis as justification by faith.

A few words may be necessary to relieve a possible anxiety on the part of those who have been baptized without having reached the profounder view of baptism advocated in this work. Not having understood baptism to embrace the spiritual elements which the Scriptures give to it, the question may

arise whether their own baptism was not deficient in these respects—whether it was really more than the *form* of Christian baptism; and, if so, whether they should not be baptized again.

Fortunately there are other ways of procuring that things be done than by directing or commanding them. The earth revolves round the sun without being commanded to do so, because certain forces *cause* it to do so. The rose blossoms in beauty, without knowing how, because the forces of nature *cause* it. It would do it no better if told how. Peter did not tell the Pentecostians to believe his preaching, but they did so because he presented evidence to *cause* that belief. Christ did not tell Saul to repent, but he did so most profoundly, for a great disclosure swept him on to it with irresistible force. We have had occasion, in the preceding pages, frequently to refer to this moral causation. Now, the place in which baptism stands in the process of conversion causes all these spiritual elements naturally to fall within it. As it is the last act before remission of sins, or salvation, it becomes the appropriative act, and appropriative faith takes place naturally within it. How many young people ever stop to think that what they choose to call the marriage ceremony contains a mental act, and that that mental act is essential to their being united in marriage? Yet such is the case, and they always take that mental step in marriage. Two friends, after long separation, may not stop to think that in the kiss of greeting there is an act of the heart, but Tennyson's statement is true to fact when he says:

"And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips."

Is it necessary to direct that the kiss shall contain

a caress, or greeting of the heart, in order to cause it to do so? Are not baby lips eloquent with all its tender meanings before they learn to analyze its character? Such things belong to the realm of spiritual *causation*, rather than to that of command. If the moral and spiritual power of the gospel do not cause baptism to palpitate with all these holy meanings, you will command it in vain. We have no reason to believe that Ananias explained baptism to Saul as embracing all the spiritual meanings which the great apostle gave to it, but we cannot doubt that Paul actually *found* it to be all this, and those who follow in his steps will have a like experience.

Preach the gospel earnestly and faithfully, and then answer inquirers as Peter did on the day of Pentecost, and if their repentance be genuine, their baptism will be all that it has been represented to be in these pages. The filling of this solemn act with these spiritual elements is not arbitrary, but natural.

But what shall be said of those who have taken the spiritual step of coming to Christ, surrendering to him, and casting themselves on his saving mercy, *before* baptism, thus depriving baptism of the greater part of its spiritual character, and then, at a later date, receiving it as an act of obedience to a divine command, and as a door into the visible church? Can immersion be much more than an empty ceremony under such circumstances? It has evidently lost much of its true character, but the question arises, *Can* such mistakes be rectified? What is done, is done. These persons cannot renounce Christ that they may give themselves up to him again. The question is not whether the baptism *should* be repeated, but whether it *can* ever be, so as to make it

what it would have been in the first place. If now performed again, it could only be a *re*-consecration to Christ, but it must have been all this instinctively when performed at its late date, so profoundly does this solemn burial and resurrection invite such an act of the heart. Strong testimony might be adduced from those who thus practice, corroborating this fact.* The heart is wiser than the head, and baptism proves to be more than they have held it to be. Baptism answers to a spiritual hunger, and hunger cannot be made to obey orders. Now, the act could be nothing more than this, should it be repeated, and so nothing would be gained. The severance of the spiritual and physical elements of the act can never be wholly remedied. The same point cannot be passed again without going back. There has been a real spiritual transference to Christ, and this ground cannot be traversed again. There can be a more complete consecration, but this did most likely take place in the baptism when it was performed. All that was required has been done; the candidate has both put on Christ and submitted to physical baptism, but not in the right order. Faith was unclothed and baptism impoverished, but it cannot now be remedied. It remains only for the Master to pardon a mistake which cannot now be corrected.

There is still another class who have also committed themselves to Christ and sought to enter into spiritual union with him previous to baptism, but who, when essaying, at a late date, to obey this command, have committed a mistake regarding the physical act required. In this case, all that was required

*See *The Millennial Harbinger*, 1869, p. 590 sq.

has not been done, and, so far, the defect can be remedied. In doing this, however, let the act not be merely formal. Let there be in the immersion a more complete surrender to the Master than has before been made. Let it contain all of baptism that is possible at this late date, and a blessing, like that attested by Dr. A. T. Pierson and others, may be expected.

The profounder and more spiritual conceptions of baptism, which it has been the aim of this work to set forth, will, it is hoped, do something toward restoring to its position of honor and usefulness, a divine institution which has been long perverted and disparaged. But this view in no way affects the question of re-baptism. This will stand as it did before.

APPENDIX

A.

(See p. 183.)

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S VIEW OF FAITH.

Most of what has been said thus far regarding faith is in accord with Alexander Campbell's teachings on the subject. He says, in the *Christian System* (p. 52), that "Faith in Christ is the effect of belief. Belief is the *cause;* and trust, confidence, or faith *in* Christ, the *effect.*" He further says: "While, then, faith is the simple belief of testimony, or of the truth, and never can be more nor less than that; as a *principle of action* it has respect to a person or thing interesting to us, and is confidence or trust in that person or thing. Now the belief of what Christ says of himself, terminates in trust or confidence in him, and as the Christian religion is a personal thing, both as regards *subject* and *object*, that faith in Christ which is essential to salvation is not the belief of any doctrine, testimony (*sic*), or truth, abstractly, but belief *in* Christ; trust or confidence in him as a person, not a thing" (p. 53).

Here we have it clearly stated that belief of the truth about Christ and faith *in* Christ are not the same; that one is *belief*, the other *trust;* that one is *cause*, the other *effect;* that one is *belief of testimony*, the other *trust in a person*, and *a principle of action;* and finally, that the faith "which is essential to salvation is not the belief of any doctrine, testimony, or truth, abstractly, but belief *in* Christ."

All this is true, and accords with what I have said; but, with all deference to so great a name, I cannot

but think that Mr. Campbell did not always sufficiently preserve the distinction between these two mental acts, else it would have been impossible for him to place the faith "which is essential to salvation" (as I understand him to do) *before* repentance.* The belief of the truth, or of testimony, naturally and generally precedes repentance, while the personal faith, trust in Christ, as I understand him to define it, not only naturally, but necessarily, follows repentance. While regarding the *belief* and the *personal faith* as different, he seems to consider them as taking place so closely together as to be, in effect, one act, transpiring at the moment of believing the truth, and all antecedent to repentance. In *Campbell on Baptism* (p. 69), he says: "The head, the heart, the will, the conscience are all simultaneously exercised in the act of believing in order to justification. The head alone believes nothing. Nor does the heart, the will, the conscience alone believe anything. The understanding simply discerns the truth, the conscience recognizes authority, the heart feels love, the will yields to requisition." This is an admirable description of faith, but it is certainly not strictly correct to say that all these things take place at precisely the same time; and it is even true that the discernment of the truth by the understanding sometimes takes place years before the yielding to requisition, or surrender. Even when such mental acts occur in the closest possible connection, there is still a sequence. A messenger stands at the door to announce the

* In *Campbell on Baptism*, p. 80, he says that "the connection between faith and repentance is that of cause and effect, of means and end"; and again: "Repentance, indeed, antecedent to faith, to me appears impossible." There are similar statements in many other places.

death of a beloved friend. The words are hardly uttered before the pang of agony is felt; but the news has first been heard, then understood and believed, and then, following this as effect follows cause, has come the pain of the heart. The overlooking of the time-relation between cause and effect in such cases makes a great deal of difference with the question we are now considering. The feeling of the heart and the act of the will, in relation to any fact, are results of the apprehension of that fact by the understanding, and must follow it in point of time, and, if by yielding to requisition Mr. Campbell means acceptance of Christ and surrender to him, this cannot take place until after we have ceased to cling to the life of sin—repentance. Thus, one of the steps embraced in this definition of faith precedes, while another must follow, repentance.

Mr. Campbell does not affirm that the belief of testimony and faith in a person are *always* the same, but that, under certain conditions (which are present in the gospel), they amount practically to the same thing; so that he can say that "faith is the simple belief of testimony," "faith can never be more than the receiving of testimony as true, or the belief of testimony," etc. His statement of the case is as follows: "To believe what a person says and to trust in him are not always identical. True, indeed, they often are; for if a person speaks to us concerning himself, and states to us matters of great interest to ourselves, requiring confidence in him, to believe what he says, and to believe or trust *in* him, are in effect, one and the same thing. Suppose a physician present himself to one that is sick, stating his ability and willingness to heal him; to believe him is to trust in him, and put

ourselves under his guidance; provided, only, we love health rather than sickness, and life rather than death" (*Christian System*, p. 52).

Now, to believe the statement of the physician, may be "*in effect*" the same as "to trust in him, and put ourselves under his guidance," but if our statement is to be *accurate* we must say that we have here two distinct and consecutive acts—(1) a belief of the understanding and (2) an act of the will, which *follows* that belief as its effect. There can be a belief of what the physician says, as true; but there can be no trust in him to heal us, until after that act of the will which accepts his services. But it is of most importance for us to consider the bearing of the qualifying clause of this comparison, viz., "provided, only, we love health rather than sickness," etc. Does not this, in its application to conversion, assume a condition in which repentance has already taken place? The sick man loves health rather than sickness, and is intent on getting rid of his di-ease, and doing everything in his power to that end, before the physician addresses him. Now, the man who has ceased to love his moral disease (sin), and is striving in every possible way to overcome it, *has already repented of his sins*—turned from them in heart and purpose. Any trust which comes into existence under such circumstances, must be a trust, not *before*, but after, repentance for sin. So the condition under which believing what Christ says and trusting in him "are in effect one and the same thing," must be one which assumes repentance for one's sins to have already taken place.

Mr. Campbell says of repentance: "Repentance is sorrow for sins committed; but it is more. It is a

resolution to forsake them; but it is more. It is actual 'ceasing to do evil and learning to do well' " (*Christian System*, p. 53). Now, if personal faith in Christ is "trusting him and putting ourselves under his guidance," and if repentance embraces a "resolution to forsake" sin, it is impossible that this faith should precede repentance. No man ever puts himself under Christ's guidance until he has first resolved to forsake his sins. Any man who should pretend to do so would be a hypocrite.

Mr. Campbell again says that "no one can be said to believe in Jesus that does not confide in him for his own personal salvation" (*Campbell on Baptism*, p. 76).*

But no man can confide in Jesus for his own personal salvation who has not formed a "resolution to forsake his sins" (repentance); for that salvation cannot come while he is living in sin and, as he has formed no resolution to forsake it, he has no reason to believe that the salvation ever will be his. Such a faith, therefore, before repentance, is a psychological impossibility. The sinner cannot confide in Christ for anything until he resolves to forsake his sins. Mr. Campbell's definition of the faith that is "essential to salvation" leaves little to be desired, but that very definition determines its place in conversion as a *sequent* of repentance.

Personal trust in Christ was clearly recognized in the first two quotations, but the demands of its nature have been overlooked when determining the position of faith in conversion, and all has been determined in

* True, he loosely speaks of this confidence in Christ, in the preceding clause, as an "effect" of faith; but in his statement in the *Christian System* (p. 53), he declares that "confidence in him" (Christ) is the faith "which is essential to salvation."

accordance with the conception of faith as the belief of testimony, or the truth. Thanks, however, to the heart, and to the gospel simply preached, this personal faith in Christ has been no idle factor in conversion itself. But, neither with the Disciples, nor with any other evangelical people, does it ever exist before the sinner resolves to forsake his sins.

One consideration which has had much to do in determining the above view, is the fact that the Scriptures themselves nowhere make any such distinctions regarding faith. They do not speak of historical faith, or faith of the understanding, of appropriative faith, etc., but simply of *faith*, without specifying different kinds;* and they do not anywhere inform us that the word *faith* is used in different senses, or that it is ever used in any sense different from the ordinary secular meaning of the term.

If we are to reproduce the primitive thought on this subject, must we not stop where the Scriptures stop, and refuse to make any such distinctions? As a matter of fact, nobody has done this. To say that the word *faith* always means the same thing, and that it is simply the receiving of testimony as true, is to go beyond the Scriptures, and declare what they nowhere say. He who says that the word *faith*—or its cognate term *believe*—is always used in the same sense transcends the Scripture utterances on this subject as completely as he who says there are various kinds of faith.† An effort has been made to respect the silence of the Scriptures on this subject by grouping togeth-

* Though there are certain phrases which are specially expressive of the personal faith in Christ, as will be seen later.

†The "one faith" spoken of in Eph. iv. 5 does not refer to the psychological nature of faith; it does not mean *one way of believing*.

er all the elements which the Scriptures give to faith, and attempting to unite them into one act, all transpiring at the same time (as in the passage quoted from *Campbell on Baptism*, p. 69), and claiming that whenever faith is spoken of it means this. But this simply results in giving us a definition of *faith* which is a psychological impossibility, and, besides, signally fails to restore the primitive thought on this subject. It is by the application of linguistic laws that that thought must be reached, not by an arithmetical grouping of concepts.

But does not the fact that the Scriptures nowhere inform us that the word *faith* is used in different senses, or that it is ever used in any other than its common or classical sense, compel us to conclude that it has but one meaning, and that the ordinary one? Emphatically, *no*. Such an assumption ignores one of the most common facts of language. We are continually using words in a great variety of senses, without stopping to inform each other of the fact; and it is still further true, except in philosophical and scientific disquisitions, that when words are used in *new* senses even, we are not informed of the fact by those so using them.

Twenty years ago, Captain Boycott, a gentleman living in Mayo, Ireland, received a peculiar kind of treatment from his neighbors. The expedient having proved successful in reaching the end desired, the same treatment was resorted to with respect to others, and this treatment began at once to be called "boycotting." Those who so used the word did not stop to say that they did not mean *Captain Boycott*, but instead a certain kind of *treatment;* they simply *used* the word in the new sense, and everybody understood

them. The newspapers took it up, and it finally became the common designation for that kind of treatment. At last it reached the lexicographer, who defined the word and pointed out the distinctions in sense, which already existed. The new sense in which this word was used was widely different from its former meaning; yet, not until we reach the lexicographer, do we have any *statement* of the difference of meaning. Suppose that during this time, because those who spoke of *boycotting* did not inform us that they were using the word in a new sense, we had contended that they always meant Captain Boycott, what a blunder it would have been!

So far is it from being true that we are informed of the fact when words are used in new senses, that the speaker himself is not generally directly conscious of it. Professor Whitney, speaking on this point, says:

"No one says to himself, or to others: 'Our language is defective in this and that particular; go to now, and let us change it'; any more than he says: 'All things carefully considered, this particular word in our speech can well enough be spared; let us cast it out.' The end aimed at—and not even with full consciousness—is the supply of a need of expression, or the attainment of a more satisfactory expression. An exigency arises, a conjuncture in which the existing available resources are not sufficient for the speaker's end, and in one or other of the various ways described above, he adds to them to answer his present purpose. Or the opportunity offers itself, and is seized, for a short cut, a new and more attractive path, to a point accessible enough in old ways. A person commits thus an addition to language without ever being aware of it; any more than the parents

who name their son reflect that they are thus virtually making an addition to the city directory."*

In the light of these facts what does it signify that the inspired writers do not inform us that they use faith in different senses, or that they often use it in a new sense not found in the common speech of their time? Simply this and nothing more: their theology was not yet formed; they had not reached the stage of verbal criticism. It has not the slightest bearing on the question whether they used the word *faith* in one or many senses. They might have used the word in *new* senses and been perfectly understood by their readers, without even having reflected that they were doing so. We can, if we choose, in preaching the gospel, speak of faith just as the apostles did, without saying what the word means, or whether it has one or many meanings, and our hearers will get a substantially correct view of the matter; but if we *study* the question and endeavor to find the exact meaning of the terms used in speaking of this faith, we are doing what the apostles did not do. At least we find nothing of the kind in their writings. If, then, we undertake to do this thing which they did not do, we must resort to no mechanical massing of concepts, but consider each use of the word in the light of its correlations, or conditions of use. In pursuance of this method, the scholarship of the world has, with singular unanimity, reached the conclusion that the word *faith* and its correlate *believe* are used in various senses in the Scriptures, and that some of these senses are peculiar to the Scriptures themselves.

**Life and Growth of Language*, p. 147.

B.

(See p. 387.)

DID SAUL RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT BEFORE OR AFTER (IN) HIS BAPTISM?

It has been thought by some that the language in Acts ix. 18 justifies the conclusion that Saul received the Holy Spirit before he was baptized. The passage reads, including *vv.* 17 and 19, as follows: "And Ananias departed and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; and he took food and was strengthened."

Meyer's interpretation is that the reception of the Holy Spirit "followed at the baptism."*

The reasons against interpreting this passage so as to place Saul's reception of the Holy Spirit before his baptism seem to me to be weighty. Let it be noted:

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*So also Martineau, who says that Paul "was baptized ere he was filled with the Holy Ghost."—*Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 516.

Philip Schaff says that Ananias "restored to the praying Saul his bodily sight, according to the divine commission, by laying his hands upon him; baptized him for the forgiveness of sins; imparted to him the gift of the Holy Ghost," etc., thus bringing baptism before the impartation of the Holy Spirit.—*History of the Apostolic Church*, p. 231. Compare also the article on *laying on of hands*, where he does not include this passage among the list of those in which the laying on of hands is represented as a "medium of the communication of the Holy Ghost."—*Ibid.* p. 584.

1. That the passage does not *say* so. Ananias, while laying hands on Saul to restore his sight, announces the object for which he was *sent*, but not that for which he lays on hands. But as we know that he laid hands on Saul for the purpose of restoring his sight, and was in the act of doing so when he uttered the language, and as the Holy Spirit was also sometimes conferred by laying on of hands, does not this imply that the Holy Spirit was then conferred? The most that can be said is that the language is ambiguous, and that, taken by itself apart from any external considerations, it readily admits of such a sense. That it necessarily conveys it, however, is not true; and there is nothing inconsistent with the view that the gift of the Holy Spirit followed Saul's baptism, if there be any reasons derived from other sources for thinking so.

2. The divine order in which baptism and the bestowment of the Holy Spirit were to stand to each other was indicated in the baptism of Jesus. There can be no reason imagined why the Holy Spirit should not have descended on Jesus previous to his baptism, if such were designed to be the divine order. This baptism was made in all possible respects the model of Christian baptism. The order here is, first, the baptism, and then, as Jesus prays, while ascending out of the water, the Holy Spirit descends upon him, and the voice from heaven acknowledges him as the beloved Son. In like manner in Christian baptism we have, first, the physical act, then the gift of the Holy Spirit and the assurance of sonship—the "Abba, Father." Peter's declaration on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 38) places the reception of the Holy Spirit unmistakably after baptism. Peter is

here announcing the gospel for all nations and for all time. This promise was to all whom "the Lord our God shall call unto him." Unless there be good evidence that this divine order was departed from, it is not allowable to assume it, or to find it in any merely ambiguous passage.

3. Paul was called to be an apostle, and the rest of the apostles received the Holy Spirit, not through the laying on of hands, but directly from heaven. They had also been previously baptized, since some of them at least had been John's disciples, and Jesus had also practiced baptism in the early part of his ministry (Jn. iv. 1 and iii. 22).

4. None but apostles could confer the Spirit by laying on of hands—at least none ever did—and Philip's converts in Samaria did not receive it till it was conferred by apostles sent from Jerusalem (Acts viii. 14-17); though it is believed that where no miraculous impartation was sought, it took place without the laying on of hands. There is no account of laying on of hands in the case of the three thousand baptized on the day of Pentecost, and no such condition is mentioned by Peter. When the church at Jerusalem learned that many converts had been made at Antioch, they sent Barnabas to them, "who, when he was come and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord"; but there is no account that either he or any one else conferred the Holy Spirit on them by imposition of hands. Such an event could hardly have been omitted from the narrative had Barnabas' mission been, like that of Peter and John to Samaria, to confer the Holy Spirit on these converts. It is evident that they had been

converted by men who had had no more authority to confer the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands than had Philip. There is no reason to believe that any apostle had ever visited Rome when Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, yet he assumes that these brethren had received the Holy Spirit (Rom. viii. 11). If the promise of the reception of the Spirit was fulfilled to the Ethiopian eunuch, it must, it would seem, have been without the laying on of hands; for he was on his way to Africa, and Philip could not confer it in that manner, as we have just seen from Acts viii.*

Now, as Ananias was not an apostle, he was not authorized to confer the Spirit by laying on of hands.

5. Even the apostles never conferred the Spirit by laying on of hands *before* baptism. So that if Ananias had been commissioned by a special dispensation to do this, he would have had no authority to do it before baptism.

6. Over and above all these facts, we may state broadly that the Holy Spirit was never in any case, or through any means, received by any one in the apostolic age before baptism, save in one instance (Acts x. and xi.), when a miracle was demanded, and the case was such that no miracle could so well serve the purpose as the miraculous impartation of the Holy Spirit. The need of the miracle in this case was clearly apparent, and the use made of it is equally plain. No such need existed in the case of Saul, and no reason of any kind can be assigned for departing from the divinely established order on this occa-

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* *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* says nothing about the impartation of the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands, or of this act being practiced at all in connection with baptism.

sion. The case of Cornelius can therefore have no bearing on this one.

7. Paul's own understanding of the matter is apparent from the occurrence at Ephesus, recorded in Acts xix. 1-7. He found a number of disciples there, who, having known only John's baptism, had not received the Holy Spirit. He was an apostle and had the power to confer the Spirit by laying on of hands, but he did not do so until he had first baptized them "into the name of the Lord Jesus." Is it likely that the Holy Spirit was conferred on Saul by laying on of hands by one who was *not* an apostle, and that, too, *before* his baptism?

8. In Titus iii. 5, Paul speaks of his own conversion in common with that of others and says: "He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out on us richly," etc. Here the "washing of regeneration" (baptism) precedes the renewing of the Holy Spirit connected with its outpouring. Whatever may have been the *fact* in Paul's case, it is certain that he classes it with others, making no distinction in respect of order. So, also, in his letter to the Galatians, he tells them that they became sons of God in their baptism (ch. iii. 26, 27), and then that *because* they were sons God had bestowed upon them the Holy Spirit (ch. iv. 6); but he classes himself *with* them in this: "God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." These passages show clearly that Paul's theology places the gift of the Holy Spirit after (or *in*) baptism, and that in speaking of cases of such bestowment he classes his own with them, without giving any hint of difference.

9. When Christ appeared to Ananias to instruct

him what to do, he spoke of his going to Saul and "laying hands on him that he *might receive his sight*" (*v.* 12); but there was nothing said about his conferring the Spirit in this manner; neither had Saul's vision contained any such intimation. Unless Ananias was specially commissioned to do this, his lanlanguage in *v.* 17 cannot possibly have this meaning.

10. When the *effect* of Ananias' laying on of hands is recorded in *v.* 18, it is said: "And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight," but no other result is recorded as having followed this act. In Paul's own account in Acts xxii. 13, he ascribes the healing of his blindness to Ananias, but does not couple with it the impartation of the Holy Spirit. If this actually took place, is it not strange that neither in the commission given to Ananias, nor in the accounts of its fulfillment by either Luke or Paul should anything be said about it?

Ananias came to Saul to do two things—to lay hands on him, and to baptize him; and, corresponding with these, two results were to follow—the restoration of sight, and the filling with the Holy Spirit.

11. I am constrained to offer one further consideration. The only reason why it is thought that the impartation of the Spirit took place through the imposition of Ananias' hands is that Ananias mentions it in connection with the healing when stating the object of his visit, and the statement was made while he was laying hands on Saul to heal his blindness. Let those who would draw this conclusion from the fact of the mention of these two things together be at pains to read Acts ix. 3-8, and ask themselves whether, if this were the only narrative of Saul's conversion, they would not conclude that Saul was the

only one of the company who fell to the earth. But in doing so they would be wrong, for in the 26th chapter, 14th verse, Paul says: "And when we were all fallen to the earth," etc. Some have thought they found a contradiction in this statement, but this is not likely, since these versions of the occurrence all come to us through Luke, and it is certain he did not consider them contradictory. The fact is, there is no contradiction, since, with Farrar, it may be supposed that all did fall to the earth, and that the rest rose and stood speechless with terror; or, with Hackett, that the phrase "stood speechless" is an idiomatic expression meaning *dumb with amazement or terror*, without referring to the position of the body. In the light of such examples in this very narrative, what is such a deduction as that referred to from the manner of speaking of the bestowment of the Holy Spirit in Acts ix. 17 worth? The fact is, we have in these three accounts in Acts ix, xxii, and xxvi *abridged narratives;* and abridged narratives must leave something out, omit connecting links, and often bring things together which did not occur together; and in such cases a narrative must be held responsible for nothing which it does not actually assert. To do otherwise would involve these three accounts in hopeless contradiction; observe this precaution, and any effort to build an exception to the divine order on the wording of Acts ix. 17, must be rejected as illegitimate. The passage can be held responsible for no more than it *states;* and it does not state that Ananias conferred the Holy Spirit on Saul by imposition of hands before his baptism, but leaves it doubtful whether the spirit was received then, or in connection with the immediately subsequent baptism.

If the passage were to read: "And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized and was filled with the Holy Spirit," there would be no semblance of contradiction in the statement to anything which had preceded. It would but decide the meaning of a statement which, as it stands, is ambiguous. But if the presence of such a clause would not have contradicted the narrative, it is clear that Ananias' statement does not determine Saul's reception of the Holy Spirit to have taken place before his baptism. It does not establish an exception to the divine order.

Unless there be some substantial proof that Ananias did what no apostle ever ventured to do, and that in the absence of any reason for doing it, we must decline to find in this narrative a breach of the divinely appointed conditions of receiving the Holy Spirit.

C.

(See p. 426)

A DISCARDED PHRASEOLOGY.

The apparent discrepancy between this passage* and his subsequent writings has usually been explained by supposing that Mr. Campbell afterward changed his views; but this is not necessary. More than once during his career he affirmed that he had not always "been equally felicitous in expressing my [his] views on some litigated questions," and in the *Harbinger* in 1842 he informs us that this statement in the McCalla debate was one of these infelicities. He says (pp. 148–9) that, though it was the best he "could think of" at the time, he had "never altogether liked the phraseology," that "if properly defined" it was in his judgment "admissible"; but he had "seen it much abused," and he thought "perhaps a term less liable to abuse might be preferred to it." He avows at this time the same belief as that held in 1823, but declares that the language had never been satisfactory; and as a matter of fact he never afterward made use of it. He continued to speak of baptism as the *formal* remission of sins, but was wont to add that this *formal* remission is also an "actual" remission; that it puts the subject into "actual possession of remission"; that it is a remission "in fact"; that baptism is "for the true, real and formal remission of sins."

*The passage reads in full: "Paul's sins were *really pardoned* when he believed, yet he had no solemn pledge of the fact, no *formal* acquittal, no *formal* purgation of his sins until he washed them away in the water of baptism." —Richardson's *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, Vol. II., p. 82.

The first part of the statement, that a man is "really pardoned" when he believes, he never again used in his life. In 1840, he said in the *Harbinger*, that a man "was virtually [not actually] and in heart in the new covenant and entitled to [not in possession of] its blessings when he believed and repented; but not formally nor in fact justified or forgiven till he put on Christ in baptism." Here the *real*, or actual, is transferred from the side of faith to that of baptism; but this is for the purpose of better expression, for he reaffirms his former view in this connection. In the Campbell and Rice debate, having had twenty years in which to consider terms of statement, Mr. Campbell plants himself upon the ground that he who believes has justification, or pardon, "in hope, in anticipation," "in grant, in right," "in promise, in expectation," but "not in actual possession" until he is baptized. Parallel with this runs the statement of the *Christian System* (p. 232) that faith is a "principle of action" that reaches remission of sins in the obedience of baptism, and that of his work on *Baptism*, that baptism is for the remission of sins by virtue of the fact that in it "faith and repentance are developed and made fruitful and effectual in the changing of our state and spiritual relations to the Divine Persons whose names are put upon us in the very act" (p. 256), and that it is to faith "thus perfected" that "the promise of remission is divinely annexed" (p. 284). What he says about baptism's being "a sign and a seal" of remission, we are not to press further than this statement and that in the Campbell and Rice debate will admit, for in that debate Mr. Campbell also affirmed that baptism is "a sign and a seal" of remission, but explained that the

believer has remission only *in right, in promise, in hope*, but not *in actual possession* till after his baptism. Abraham's spiritual relations to God were not changed by his circumcision, and he had before all the rights and privileges of a justified man, while Mr. Campbell always taught that the gift of the Holy Spirit and other privileges of the kingdom are to be reached through baptism.

In keeping with the fact that Mr. Campbell was not satisfied with the language in the McCalla debate is the fact that in his debate with Mr. Rice, Mr. Rice quoted the passage referred to in the McCalla debate, in both its parts, and, indorsing it fully, offered to shake hands with Mr. Campbell on it. That Mr. Rice was prepared to accept the quotation in its entirety, including the part which spoke of "formal" remission, is evident from avowals made earlier in the debate. In speaking of union with Christ he had used the very terms used by Mr. Campbell, declaring that faith "unites to Christ *really*," and baptism "connects us with him *formally*" (p. 465); and on page 476 he quotes from Calvin the statement that baptism is a symbol of purification, or a symbolic purification (parallel to Mr. Campbell's "formal purgation") and then compares it to a "legal instrument properly attested," which assures us of the remission of our sins; and then he (Mr. Rice) indorses this as precisely his own view (p. 476). This, in a fair sense, was just what Mr. Campbell's "formal pledge," "formal acquittal," "formal purgation" might be taken to affirm, and Mr. Rice was ready to stand on this declaration. This was but another instance in which the unfortunate language of the McCalla de-

bate was construed as expressing what Mr. Campbell did not mean.

It is not difficult to see that Mr. Campbell could hold that a man has remission of sins "in promise," "in hope," "in grant," "in right," when he believes, and "in actual possession" when he is baptized, and still find expression of his views in the statement that the sinner is "*really pardoned*" when he believes and "*formally*" pardoned when he is baptized. If a man has anything *by grant*, *by right*, we may easily say it is *really* his, though he may not have yet come into possession of it; and one might be said to be *really* pardoned in the same sense at the moment of believing, but the language would not be well-chosen, and would be liable to convey the idea of actual possession. A man who had been elected to the presidency might be said to be *really* president in the sense that he had a right to the office, but the language would not be accurate. He is correctly called *president elect* before his inauguration, and *president*—that is, without limitation, in actual possession of the office—after his inauguration. Again, *formal* remission may convey either one of two different meanings. An act may be *formal* and be at the same time *real*, or it may be *merely* formal. If the marriage ceremony is performed at a silver or golden wedding, it is merely a form, and leaves everything as it was before; but the primary marriage was *more* than formal, establishing new relations and conferring new rights and privileges. Formal remission might mean a mere formal or symbolic act looking back to some previous remission and giving assurance of it. This was Mr. Rice's view. But it might mean also the conveying of actual remission, actual possession of remission, in a

formal manner. This was Mr. Campbell's view. Thus the language was ambiguous.

Mr. Campbell's language in the McCalla debate was unfortunate in another respect. To say that the convert is *really* pardoned when he believes, and *formally* pardoned when he is baptized, is to imply that the pardon he receives at baptism is *not real*, or *actual*, as Mr. Campbell repeatedly declares it to be. Hence the language was misleading.

Of course, the position taken in this book runs clear of any of these difficulties by finding in the spiritual element in baptism a part of that meaning which is designated by *faith*; but it would seem that, in justice to Mr. Campbell, we should cease to use, as representative of his position, a form of expression which he was not satisfied with from the first; which he ceased to use himself; which he replaced by other statements in the *Christian System*, in the Campbell and Rice *Debate*, and in his work on *Baptism*, parallel in import; which he refused to stand by when challenged to do so; and which might be fairly interpreted to express his opponents' views quite as well as his own.

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